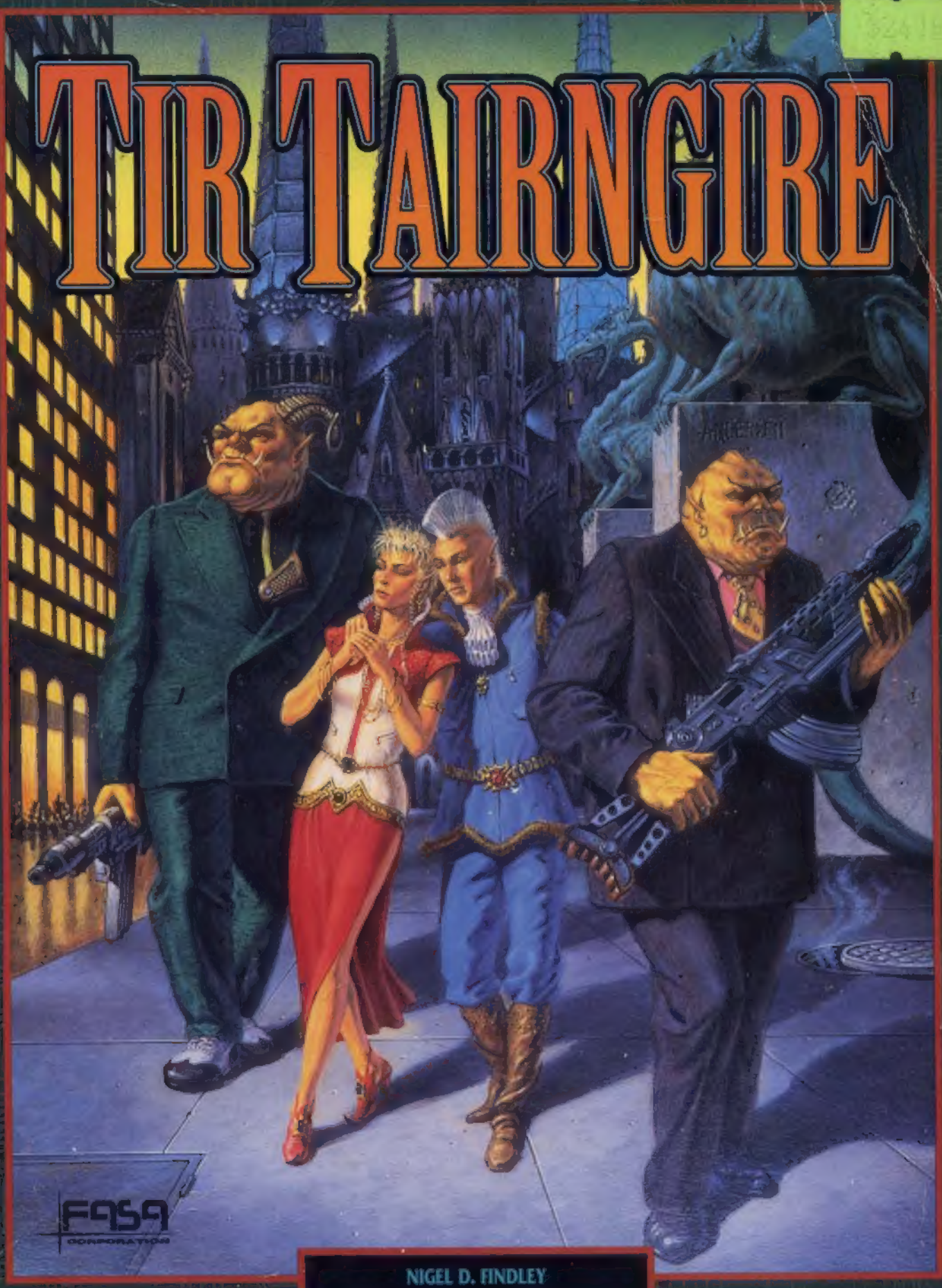
SHADOWRUN™ 7210

TIR TAIRNGIRE



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TIR TAIRNGIRE: The Land of Promise
A *Shadowrun* Sourcebook

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WELCOME TO...

SHADOWLAND

"I have taken all knowledge to be my province."
— Francis Bacon, 1592

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Tir Tairngire (HERE IT IS!)	OK
Tir Nan Og (En route!)	NOT AVAILABLE
Shadowtech Compilation (Weird Science 101)	OK

TIR TAIRNGIRE:THE LAND OF PROMISE

Introduction	OK
First Impressions	OK
Geography	OK
How It Came To Be	OK
Politics	OK
Tir Society	OK
Economy	OK
Telecommunications	OK
Law	OK
Tir Tairngire Peace Force	OK
Portland	OK
Salem	OK
Eugene	OK
Open Conference	OK

DOWNLOAD ALL? OK

NOTE FROM CONTROL—Anyone with any knowledge regarding sabotage to this system should contact me ASAP. Censorship will not be tolerated!

INTRODUCTION

Tir Tairngire is a sourcebook for the **Shadowrun** game system. It describes the elven nation of Tir Tairngire, located in the territory covered by present-day Oregon. Similar to other **Shadowrun** sourcebooks, **Tir Tairngire** is formatted as an electronic document from that fictional world. Scattered throughout the document are comments and additions from readers who seek to correct, expand, corroborate, or contradict the information it presents. Because this "black" information comes from characters within the game universe, players or characters cannot safely assume that these comments are truthful, accurate, considered, or clearly thought out (though they may be all those things).

Unlike other **Shadowrun** sourcebooks, the core information given about Tir Tairngire comes mainly from a single, biased source. And like the reader-posted "shadowtalk," even this information should not be accepted without question. This biased point of view gives gamemasters greater scope to decide what of the information presented is accurate, misleading, or false in their own game.

No other **Shadowrun** sourcebooks are needed to use **Tir Tairngire**, though the information in the **Grimoire, Second Edition** and the **London Sourcebook** may prove useful. **Tir Tairngire** works with both the original and the second-edition **Shadowrun** game rules.

>>>>>[Okay, chummers, scan this.

Documents like the one you're accessing now are why Shadowland is important, why we keep our main server hub safe in the Nexus in the good ol' Denver Data Haven.

Lots of you Faithful Readers have been chewing my construct about why Shadowland never posts anything about Tir Tairngire, why my fellow Neo-Anarchists haven't blown the lid off the homeland of the dandelion-eaters not too far south of here.

Let me assure you, chummers, we've tried. *Frag*, have we tried. At least five times we've posted files sent to us by our varied correspondents—files ranging from closely reasoned sociopolitical analysis to gibbering, drooling polemics. *Every time* we tried to download the data, *something* went wrong. The file "accidentally" got corrupted, or was "accidentally" erased. Of the last two submissions, the chummers who originally uploaded the files also got "accidentally erased." One bought it in "random street violence;" a fragging *hearse* hit the other guy. (Nice touch, that.) We naturally reached the conclusion that the elves of the Tir simply didn't want their dirty laundry aired on our august bulletin board.

Just when we stop trying, along comes the contributor who calls himself/herself/itself Spes (Latin for "hope," for you non-linguists out there), claiming to be an elf from the Tir who's a tad miffed about the way the ruling class is handling things. Wants to tell the rest of the world how things work in the Tir. Do we want to hear what he's got to say? Spes asks.

Are you fragging kidding? we reply.

So here it is. The following files contain dirt that Spes uploaded to the Denver Data Haven. Interesting stuff, I'm sure you'll agree. When we—your humble editors and sysops—read it, we knew we'd vidied our biggest scoop ever. If the lowdown our other contributors transmitted was enough to make the Tir elves crack into Shadowland and trash the files, we figured *this* material would make them go to war. We transferred the files directly to the Denver Data Haven as soon as we uploaded them, and strongly suggested that the boys and girls in Denver beef up their security—physical as well as Matrix.

Fragging good thing, too.

We expected a few crack Tir deckers to come gunning for the files, maybe backed by some shadowrunners to penetrate physical security. We *didn't* expect military action.

But that's what we got. A commando team—from the Tir; where else?—came sneaking into Denver to try to blow the Data Haven to shrapnel. They'd have done it, too, if they hadn't strayed into the Sioux Autonomous Zone and run into a group of Sioux Special Forces Wildcats.

Of course, this created a big diplomatic stink, but it got squelched macro-fast. By the time the Tir got it together to stage another raid, it was too late: we'd already transmitted copies of Spes' files to all the subordinate server hubs throughout North America and our associated systems in Europe and Japan.

So scope this drek. The Tir tried *real hard* to stomp on this material, which makes us believe it's important. Granted, it's biased, so we can't vouch for its accuracy (we've got no other sources to check it against), but it sure tied somebody's karma in a knot. So take it with maybe half a grain of salt.

Oh, and a note to any Tir assassins out there—I don't know who Spes is, and I don't want to know.]<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (12:11:31/2-4-54)

>>>>>[Don't you believe it—this is all a sleazer trick, another way to spread elven disinformation. What better way to make us swallow a pack of lies than trying "unsuccessfully" to suppress those lies? Captain Chaos and the rest are just taking the elves' bait.]<<<<<

—TomTom (18:16:21/2-08-54)

>>>>>[Whoa...this guy sounds a little paranoid, even for a shadowrunner.]<<<<<

—Marci (21:50:32/2-08-54)

>>>>>[Tom, Tom, Tom...up to your usual tricks, I see. Still seeing conspiracies behind *everything*.]<<<<<

—Zack Black (11:15:36/2-10-54)

>>>>>[But conspiracies *are* behind everything!]<<<<<

—TomTom (17:41:52/2-10-54)

>>>>>[QED.]<<<<<

—Zack Black (09:00:18/2-11-54)

>>>>>[While the files uploaded by Spes give the dirt on Tir Tairngire, it's come to my attention that some of you out there don't know the *basic* stuff on the nation, either. So I've supplemented Spes' data with excerpts from standard databases, tourist advisories, and other SINner-type info sheets. I haven't bothered to annotate these sources (copyright credit? don't make me yarf), but you'll be able to tell what's Spes' stuff and what isn't by the tone and content. Believe me.]<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (23:20:53/2-12-54]

>>>>>[We are distressed by the fact that a service normally as effective and unbiased as Shadowland has fallen prey to the subterfuges of the Humanis Policlub and their allies. We possess unequivocal proof that Spes is a member of that wretched organization, and will gladly upload our evidence to this BBS on request. Readers of and contributors to Shadowland must understand that the "truths" told by the poli who calls himself Spes are nothing but lies created to spread distrust and hatred of elves and foment racial violence. Spes has cleverly supported his lies with enough truth to weave a frighteningly believable tale. The obvious effort dedicated to this one disinformation document indicates that the Humanis Policlub is strongly committed to destabilizing relations between Tir Tairngire and the other nations of North America.]<<<<<

—Lerethien Verantin, Tir Tairngire Consul General (08:15:08/2-13-54)

>>>>>[Spes' file has been a long time coming, but I, and others in the Tir, knew this day would arrive. Considering the frightening efficiency of current techniques of "information appropriation," I am frankly amazed that it has taken so long. Kudos, I suppose, to Lord Tathern and the Information Secretariat, though I can't imagine he and his subords are too pleased at the moment. His supporters within the inner circles must also be displeased, though I and a few others welcome these revelations. To twist the famous quote, something is rotten in the Tir and there are things to be done. The problem, I suspect, is that much of what we consider rotten is in fact deliberately planned, and that foresight will make bringing about change all the more difficult.

Readers might find it helpful to view Tir Tairngire as an onion. Common, public knowledge, that created and disseminated by the Tir, represents the first layer of the onion. This file serves as the second, and perhaps the third skins of the Tir onion. Many more layers remain hidden, but I will annotate this file, as I'm sure will others, adding in what little I know from my inside position. Some things, however, even I am not privy to; I'll relate those as rumor and innuendo as appropriate.]<<<<<

—Aegis (21:13:13/2-17-54)

>>>>>[Oh yes, yes. Words, tales, and facts make you all shake your heads in horror. How little you know, and how little Spes reveals. (Him, Lerethien? Are you certain? Good.) Wonder more at what remains hidden, awaiting revelation. In time, in time. Everything comes to the patient in time. And listen to Aegis; he knows what he reveals, and doesn't...]<<<<<

—The Laughing Man (12:14:32/2-19-54)

>>>>>[And I just *love* this whole concept of mass-distributed gossip and recrimination and appalled defense. Long-distance conversations are so much easier now than in the old days!]<<<<<

—The Laughing Man (08:16:21/3-11-54)

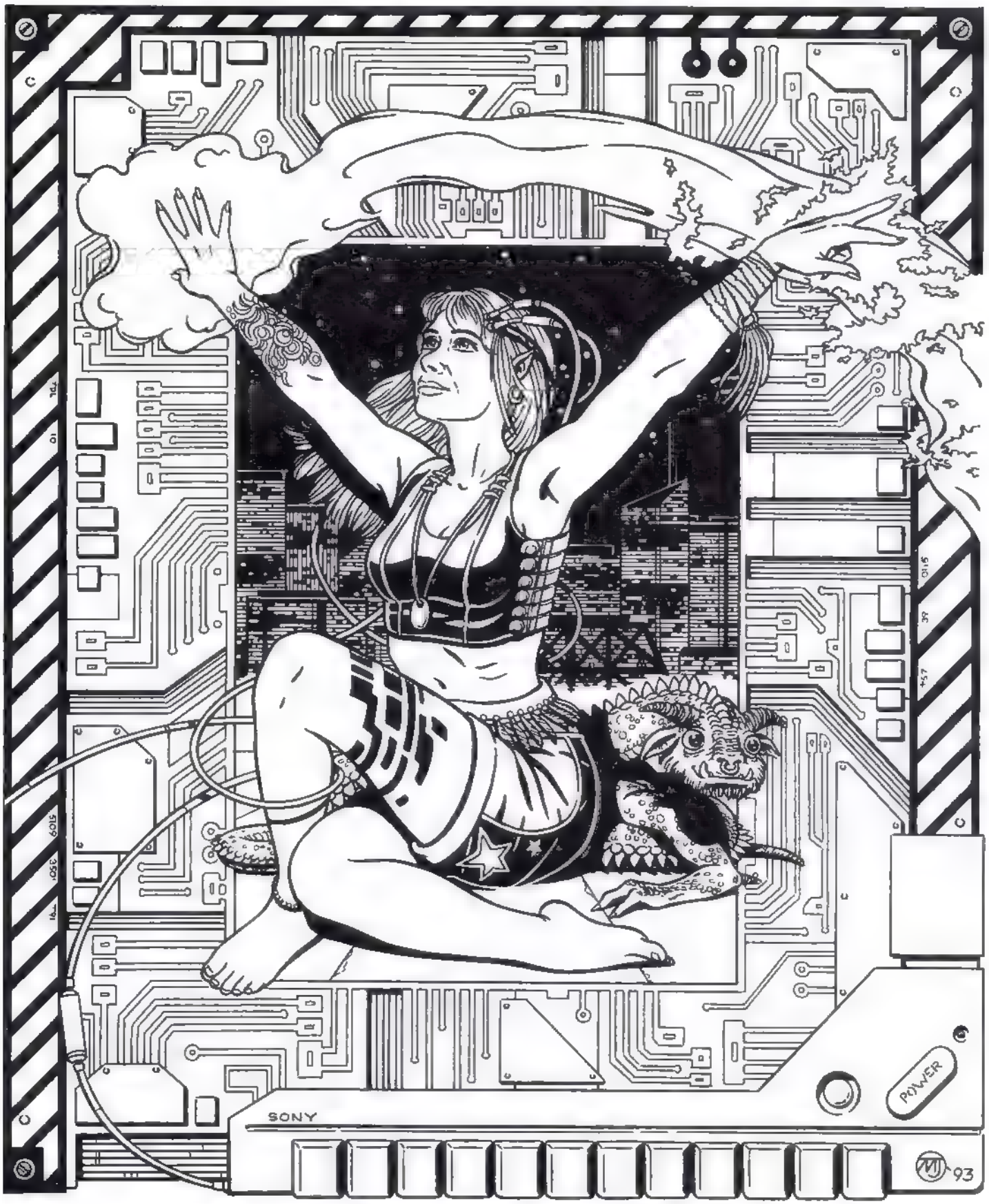
>>>>>[Would a comment here from me be considered unwise?]<<<<<

—The Big 'D' (01:09:32/3-11-54)

>>>>>[Only if you're mindful of our last conversation...]<<<<<
—The Laughing Man (18:51:20/3-15-54)

>>>>>[Understood.]<<<<<
—The Big 'D' (01:12:51/3-17-54)

>>>>>[I don't think I wanna know... .]<<<<<
—Uncle Mike (02:13:56/3-17-54)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FIRST IMPRESSIONS

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Population: 5,610,000
- Human: 1%
- Elf: 85%
- Dwarf: 7%
- Ork: 5%
- Troll: Negligible
- Other: 2%

Per Capita Income: 55,000¥
Population Below Poverty Level: 15%
On Fortune's Active Traders List: 1%
Megacorporate Affiliation: 7%
Tir Tairngire-based Corporate Affiliation: 38%
Education:
- High School Equivalency: 53%
- College Equivalency: 30%
- Advanced Studies Certificate: 13%

Regional Telecom Grid Access: NA/TT

>>>>>[The intro material in these first two files comes from an official Tourists' Advisory file I found in the newsnets, and provides basic official background on the Tir. Feel free to insert all the usual comments, corrections, speculations, and so on. For more details on this information and deep background, see Spes' files that follow.]<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (15:22:33/2-12-54)

>>>>>[Most experts consider the population numbers published by the Tir government questionable. Eighty-five percent elven population seems hardly credible when the percentage of initial UGE/elven births and the breeding rate of humans/elves are taken into consideration. Remember that only forty or so years have passed since UGE began; that's two or three generations worth of reproduction (depending on the point from which breeding potential is measured).

The Tir insists that its numbers are accurate, and anyone walking around the Tir would have to agree.]<<<<<

—Number Man (09:12:52/3-3-54)

>>>>>[Statistics prove that the percentage of post-2011 elven births recorded in Tir Nan Og (Ireland) rose far above the global average. The elf/dwarf birth rate also showed higher in the Pacific Northwest than any other portion of the then-United States. The same later held true for ingentisization. Geographical variance in population expression—what an interesting thought.]<<<<<

—People Person (12:51:54/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Hold that thought!]<<<<<
—The Laughing Man (08:22:09/3-11-54)

CLIMATE

West of the Cascade Mountains, the ocean moderates the climate to mild and humid conditions. Temperatures in July and August may reach 39 degrees Celsius, and often drop as low as –20° C in the middle of winter. Annual precipitation in the coastal region averages 3,500 mm. East of the Cascades, away from the Pacific's moderating influence, the average temperature is more extreme, ranging from summer highs of 43° C to winter lows of –37°. In the interior tableland region, annual precipitation averages only 250 mm to 500 mm.

The humidity level varies, depending on the area and time of year. During fall, winter, and spring, a thin, bone-chilling fog often shrouds Tir Tairngire's coast.

>>>>>[And when it's not foggy during those seasons, there's usually a storm brewing.]<<<<<
—Lane (14:06:31/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Summers are really nice, particularly inland. The coast is always beautiful, but an almost constant wind from the west keeps it cooler than you'd expect.]<<<<<
—Tengu (18:57:34/3-13-54)

>>>>>[I've checked the old meteorological records for this area, and the present weather conditions are quite different than those recorded back at the turn of the century. Tir seems to get more storms off the Pacific than the same area used to, and the temperature variation from place to place within the nation also appears greater. Any guesses as to why?]<<<<<
—Woppler the Weatherman (20:11:56/3-17-54)

>>>>>[Magic, most likely. You know how magical elves are. The only surprise is that the weather's not more drekked-up.]<<<<<
—Tess (22 51:17/3-25-54)

>>>>>[You obviously have no idea how much energy must be released into the environment to have a measurable effect on the weather. Sure, the elves are mages. But there's no fragging way they can be playing with *that* much power. Trust me on this one.]<<<<<
—Strier (03:04:40/3-26-54)

>>>>>[Really? The Indians seemed able to do it. Or have you forgotten the Ghost Dance already? Also, check the various NAN files here in Shadowland: the weather is unusual in all these territories.]<<<<<
—Sorcerer (14:58:51/3-27-54)

>>>>>[One really shouldn't mess with Mother Nature and expect to get away with it.]<<<<<
—The Laughing Man (09:15:32/3-28-54)

>>>>>[Funny you should say that.]<<<<<
—The Big 'D' (14:13:09/4-01-54)

GETTING TO TIR TAIRNGIRE

>>>>>[This whole section's a waste of time. Unless you plan to slip the border, you ain't getting into the Tir...]<<<<<
—Sally Steele (17:58:11/2-28-54)

>>>>>[Some people *do* get in legally, Sally. (Not street monsters like us, of course.) In general, however, let's just say that the Tir's economy doesn't depend on tourism for its health.]<<<<<
—LA Gearjammer (20.00:01/3-1-54)

By Plane

Three international airports serve Tir Tairngire—Morningstar Field in Portland, Mahlon Sweet Airport just northwest of Eugene, and McNary Field in Salem. Though all three are classified as international, Mahlon Sweet and McNary only handle short-haul flights between Tir Tairngire and the nearby Native American Nations. No regularly scheduled flights travel between Seattle and either of these smaller airports.

Morningstar Field—formerly Portland International Airport—is the only air facility in the Tir capable of handling suborbitals and semiballistics. Morningstar also accommodates orbital shuttles up to *Aurora*-class.

Only the Tir Tairngire national airline, *Cinanestial* ("Skywing") may land aircraft at these three Tir airports.

>>>>>[Contrary to what passes for facts in this obviously rigorously researched document, there *are* regular flights into and out of the Tir. The trick isn't finding one, it's getting on after you've paid.]<<<<<
—Flyboy (13:16:44/3-2-54)

>>>>>[You got that, chummer. Every city that *Cinanestial* connects to supports a detachment of Tir customs and immigration squonks who must approve every would-be passenger before boarding. Potential Tir travelers must show ident and travel authorization to three—count 'em, three—different officials, each of whom can turn that person back if he doesn't like that person's voice, haircut, or the way his breath smells. While the passenger gets the once-over, his or her baggage undergoes an even more intense search program: X-rays, magic scans, chem-sniffers, trained dogs, and even the old-fashioned hand search for a randomly selected percentage. Anything that an inspector doesn't like the looks of gets confiscated, dumped in water, or blown up by a bomb-disposal robot. Obviously, you can't carry weapons on board or in your baggage; even attempting to is a crime. And remember, the line-up for immigration is considered part of Tir Tairngire soil.]<<<<<
—Nimby (23:11:41/3-8-54)

>>>>>[The baggage-checker slots fragged up big time a couple of years back. Somehow, an "unaccompanied" suitcase made it aboard a short-hop flight from Cheyenne to Salem, in defiance of all passenger-luggage check-in systems and airline regulations and double-checks, and blew up with spectacular results when the plane reached cruising altitude. Four anti-elf policlubs claimed responsibility. Heads rolled in the Tir customs/immigration branch, and security has been even tighter since then.]<<<<<
—Pamela (20:00:16/3-9-54)

>>>>>[If it matters, I understand that heads *literally* rolled.]<<<<<
—Aegis (09:49.01/3-12-54)

By Road

Access to Tir Tairngire by major established land routes is via Highway 5 (originally Interstate 5) heading south from Seattle, crossing the Tir border at the Columbia River. The highway also gives access to the Tir from the south, leading northward from California Free State toward Yreka. From the east, the only major route into the Tir is Highway 84, heading north-northwest from Caldwell in the Ute Nation.

The Customs and Immigration Service provides border security. This well-trained paramilitary force takes its responsibility seriously.

>>>>>[Border crossing stations resemble hardened military emplacements—prestressed concrete glacis, slit windows, heavy-duty comm links sprouting from the roof. The Sentry gun emplacements are harder to spot, but they're there, and pack enough firepower to stop anything smaller than a Banshee LAV—using mostly Vanquisher miniguns, Vigilant rotary autocannons, SAAB Saaker SAMs, and some nasty homegrown AVMs. (Who says elves can't build weapons?) Your typical main border station sports two dozen CIS goons, loaded for fragging bear and armored like there's no tomorrow. At least one armored vehicle also guards every main station—the Tir just bought a bunch of Appaloosa Light Scout Vehicles from Ferrari, and one or two light rotorcraft, Yellowjackets or the equivalent. For those of you who usually laugh at all this mundane drek, be warned that at least two CIS goons at every station will be mages tough enough to flay the flesh from your bones with a single look. Word to the wise, chummers.]<<<<<
—Bullyboy Grim (10:52:31/3-1-54)

>>>>>[The plus side to the Tir putting so much effort into border intercephon is that trespassers tend to travel unopposed once they get in.]<<<<<
—Uncle Ed (02:52:41/3-8-54)

>>>>>[More about the border and border patrol shows up in later sections, including the next one.]<<<<<
—Captain Chaos (10:56:50/3-10-54)

By Sea

The minor port of Astoria on the mouth of the Columbia River constitutes the Tir's only official port of entry. Set up primarily to handle cargo, it offers only rough facilities for receiving passenger vessels. Ships carrying passengers sometimes sail up the Columbia to Portland and dock there, but that port of call also provides limited passenger facilities.

>>>>>[So no warm welcome for official passengers. For *un*official passengers, the welcome often gets a little too warm. As is customary at most ports, any ship putting in at Astoria or Portland has to take on a local pilot to enter port. The Tir pilot knows his harbor navigation, but he's also a mage responsible for finding stowaways or crewmen planning to jump ship. The Tir also holds all foreign cargo vessels "in bond," Tir longshoremen load and unload the ships, and the vessel's crew must stay on board during the process.]<<<<<
—Salty Dog (15:57:55/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Okay, okay, we get the fragging point. The dandelion-eaters are paranoid about unwelcome visitors. So tell us about the less official ways of getting into the country.]<<<<<
—TomTom (22:10:31/3-7-54)

>>>>>[Let's work through them in order

Overland? Possible, but tough. The Tir has a long border compared to the number of CIS and uniformed army slots assigned to guard it, and so the border itself consists of two fences, 8 meters or so high, topped with cutwire and wired with sensors, 25 meters apart. The area between the fences is a no-man's-land of mines, sensors, and hungry paranimals. The inside fence is patrolled by the army's Border Division on an irregular rotation, and also by various types of drones and RPVs. I don't know what magical defenses the Tir has, but I'd guess they're there as well.

By air? (Maybe buzz over the border in an ultralight then put down somewhere quiet.) I wouldn't want to risk it. I've heard the Tir's radar coverage described as the "no-sparrow-shall-fall" network. TT's air force isn't really up to scratch—two squadrons of modified EFA variants as the first-line defense, one F-B Eagle for ground support and other missions—but it's plenty for border defense, and they've got enough small missile-armed choppers to ruin your day The key to penetrating the border by air is response time: the Tir air forces don't patrol, they only respond to alarms. If you plan it right, and time it better, you might make it.

By sea? I think I like this option best. The Tir mounts a coastal patrol force—more drones, a couple dozen GMC-Beechcraft Patrollers, and a handful of Blohm & Voss Ocean Commanders—but the coastline's long enough to stretch that force pretty thin. I'd handle it by picking a drekky night to get dropped off by a larger vessel, at least 41 klicks offshore—remember, the Tir claims its territory extends 40 klicks out to sea—and come in on something small with a very low signature.]<<<<<
—Bullyboy Grim (14:16:44/3-11-54)

>>>>>[The Tir does indeed use magical defenses. An abundance of those gibbering things commonly called watcher spirits trace the border at the speed of thought, and odder things as well. If you speak with one in the know, ask them how work proceeds on the Great Ward]<<<<<
—The Laughing Man (19:02:27/3-15-54)

>>>>>[The "Great Ward?" I've never heard of it, but I'll take your word that it exists.]<<<<<
—Aegis (19:51:49/3-17-54)

>>>>>[What about the *shinkansen*?]<<<<<
—Toshikazu (23:15:34/3-18-54)

>>>>>[Sure, the bullet train runs between Seattle and San Francisco, thus crossing the Tir, but it's inside a fragging tube, remember, and there's no stations within Tir Tairngire. You might be able to stop the train somehow, but you'd still have to get out of the tube. And you

can bet the Tir's got all the standard exits guarded]<<<<<
—Morton (02:44:10/3-19-54)

>>>>>[What about the *non*standard exits?]<<<<<
—Maximillian (12:03:17/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Tell ya what, why don't you try it and tell us all about it if you survive?]<<<<<
—Morton (01:13:54/3-22-54)

ON ARRIVAL

For admission into the Tir, visitors from other countries must show a valid passport from their home nation, medical records providing proof of relevant inoculations and so on (this varies depending on the country of origin), a one-way airline ticket out of the Tir (regardless of how the visitor entered the country), and a Visitor's Authorization Visa complete with an associated photo ident scan.

The Visitor's Authorization Visa (VAV) is the key document, available only in locations outside Tir Tairngire. Prospective visitors must apply in person to the nearest Tir Tairngire consulate, if their country of origin supports one, or electronically via the Matrix to the Visa Division of the Tir national government. The applicant must tender all personal records, including military, medical, and criminal, if applicable, an up-to-date photograph, a high-resolution retinal scan, a listing of all current transimplant or personal enhancement technology, his or her reason for traveling to the Tir, and a signed/notarized authorization for the Tir to establish the bona fides of any records included with the application. Processing the VAV takes four to six weeks, and not everyone who applies for one receives it. The Tir considers entry into the country a privilege, not a right, and may reject any application without explanation. The VAV includes an encrypted file that must be loaded onto the visitor's credstick, and a macroplast identity card bearing a holographic image. The visitor *must* carry the identity card at all times, and must show it on request to any Tir Tairngire Peace Force officer, both the police and military branches. A VAV remains valid for up to 30 days. Any visitor unable to produce a valid VAV can be charged with a serious criminal offense.

>>>>>[Take note: the VAV is heavily encrypted, and you can't jigger with something you can't decrypt. The Tir uses a seven-cycle algorithm with a 65-bit key for this job, which means only the slickest bit-bashers in Seattle can crack the encryption. That's why a VAV costs so fragging much in the shadows—only a true data artist can whip one up.]<<<<<
—Ratfink (16:42:17/2-15-54)

>>>>>[So how does all this work? When you show up at the Tir border with your documentation, they compare the holo on the VAV card with your face just to make sure they match. Then they give you a retinal scan and compare the result with the data encrypted in your VAV file—again, just to make sure you're you. Any kind of discrepancy means you're hosed where you stand, and only the best data forgery can *avoid* creating a discrepancy. They also check your medical record and "reconfirm" it with a quick blood test. What they're actually doing is taking a tissue sample that they keep on file. This gives them a real nasty handle on you if you go AWOL or something, allowing a mage to slam any kind of nasty spell into you remotely.]<<<<<
—Spider (13:09:54/2-17-54)

>>>>>[Remember that your application for the VAV includes details on all your transimplant tech and cyberware. The Tir may summarily turf your application, if they don't like your particular assortment of toys. If they send you a VAV, the encrypted file automatically includes all the cyberware details in your application. When you show up at the border to visit their fair country they'll run you through a top-of-the-line scanner to make sure that the reality matches your application. If you "neglected" to inform them about the SMG mounted in your cyberarm and the scanner picks it up, you're bounced, or worse.]<<<<<
—Mary C (09:58:53/2-19-54)

>>>>>[A chummer of mine who runs the shadows got shipped down to the Tir on a job for some high mucky-muck on the Council. (No names for obvious reasons.) He scanned like a walking cyberware emporium, but he got through the border with no grief. They restrained some of his more *aggressive* implants, but that was it. Moral of the story: the Council can waive whatever rules they like, whenever they like.]<<<<<
—Slick (10:18:53/2-25-54)

>>>>>[For the common hoi-polloi, though, the rules are engraved in stone, Slick old chummer. No offensive cyberware, no firearms: *none*, zero tolerance. They've got metal detectors good enough to give Seattle corp security outfits wet dreams, plus chem-sniffers set to detect propellant and explosives. They don't allow cyberdecks, and they've got a real bug up their hoop about BTLs. They check every program chip they find, and give you a world of grief if you're carrying one they don't like.

And remember: you are officially on Tir territory when you meet the customs boys and go through the checks. That means Tir laws are in force. If you try to slip something through and they catch you, they might not just turn you away. If they're in a bad mood, they might charge you with "import infringement," send you before a *brehon* (judge), and toss your sorry hoop in jail. For a *long* time.]<<<<<
—Tommyknocker (23:13:17/2-27-54)

>>>>>[It's a minor point, but the Tir officials don't have to explain to you why they rejected your VAV application. It might not be anything obvious like offensive cyberware. I got rejected last year, and the only implants I've got are cybereyes with a vid link. Not enough to make your typical Seattle corp even twitch, but enough to make me persona non grata in the Tir.]<<<<<
—Mary C (09:58:25/2-28-54)

CURRENCY

The official currency of the Tir is the nuyen, in accordance with the international standard. Most transactions use electronic credit, as in the UCAS, though the natives carry limited-use hard currency as well. The Tir prints specially woven, all-natural fiber bills in denominations of 5, 10, 25, 100, and 500 nuyen. All but a small fraction of large transactions use credit. Metal coins of copper and

silver alloys come in denominations of one-tenth, one-fourth, and one-half nuyen.

>>>>>[The Tir government continues to debate the issue of whether or not the country should issue a unique currency for use within its borders. The economists argue that such a move is unnecessary and adds additional levels of complexity to international dealings. The culturists feel that Tir Tairngire must continue to distinguish and separate itself from the rest of the world, and that a unique currency is one step in that direction. Time will tell.]<<<<<

—The Chromed Bookkeeper (10:37.16/3-15-54)

>>>>>[Who uses hard currency anyway?]<<<<<

—Card (00 38.18/3-16-54)

>>>>>[*I* do. For illegal transactions and bribes. You can't audit-trail bills and coins, chummer. And if you put bribes on your credstick, you're even dumber than you look. Even in legal dealings electronic transfers aren't always convenient.]<<<<<

—Break-Break (18:51:24/3-18-54)

GETTING AROUND

To assist visitors with motor travel in the cities, Tir Tairngire boasts a GridGuide system even more sophisticated than the one in Seattle. Outside the cities, driving and navigation is left to the vehicle operators. In general the highways in the Tir are in much better repair than the roads through the Salish-Shidhe Council nation and most other Native American Nations. Tir Tairngire allows only electrically powered vehicles inside the nation's borders.

>>>>>[Predictably, this power-source restriction doesn't apply to the top dogs and their lapdogs, who get to drive or ride in whatever the frag they like. Only the underdogs have to stick with the no-petrochem rule.]<<<<<

—Rover (15:27:56/3-1-54)

Cinanestial, the national airline, provides short-haul "skyhopper" service between major population centers within the Tir on a regular schedule. For more spontaneous travel, or for trips to unscheduled destinations, *Cinanestial* also offers an on-call "skycab" service. The price difference between the two services is substantial; regularly scheduled service between Portland and Eugene costs approximately 36 nuyen, and skycab service for the same route costs roughly 100 nuyen.

>>>>>[For scheduled short-haul flights, *Cinanestial* uses Embraer-Dassault Mistrals (commuter variant) or the old standby F-8 Commuter 2050s. Skycab service uses smaller F-8 Merlins or even Airship Industries Skyswimmer LTAs, believe it or not. (The dandelion-eaters like things with solar panels, I guess.)]<<<<<

—Sky Pilot (13:12:34/3-2-54)

The Tir maintains an electric maglev "people-mover," powered by the country's own hydroelectric power plant and supplemented by solar panels, that runs along the Highway 5 "corridor." It serves locations between Portland in the north and Eugene in the south. The commuter track stops at all towns along the way, while the express route stops only at Salem.

>>>>>[A nice, clean system. Maximum speed pushes 300 kph, with the average speed for the express route clocking in at around 280 kph. Portland to Eugene, express, costs about 70¥; the milk-run costs about 60¥.]<<<<<

—Gene (21:52:43/3-4-54)

LAWS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement in all areas of Tir Tairngire is provided by the Tir Tairngire Peace Force, a paramilitary organization. The Peace Force <<**block delete: 1.1 Kp**>>

>>>>>[I've cut out most of the namby-pamby drek from the Tourists' Advisory. There's dirt on this group in a later file. For the moment, suffice it to say that the Tir strictly enforces its laws, and that no one can afford to take the Peace Force lightly.]<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (15:40:41/2-12-54)

Illegal and Addictive Substances

The Tir upholds strict regulations regarding alcohol. As in the UCAS, public intoxication carries a misdemeanor charge in the Tir, but the elven nation actually enforces the laws. Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) is a felony offense, with .03 percent blood alcohol marking the level of legal intoxication. The common DWI defense of vehicular manslaughter cannot be pled in the Tir; if an intoxicated driver kills someone, the driver is charged with premeditated murder.

>>>>>[Keep this law in mind when you're coming home from the local watering hole. *One* beer puts an average human well over the legal limit for a couple of hours. Orks and trolls can drink slightly more, but as a rule of thumb, if you've got the slightest buzz on, you're legally intoxicated.]<<<<<

—MADDman (13:35:36/2-16-54)

In addition to upholding strict laws on public intoxication, the Tir also fails to recognize intoxication as a mitigating factor in other criminal activities.

Both visitors and residents can buy beer, wine, and mead at any grocery or convenience store between the hours of 11:00 and 24:00 (these hours apply regardless of the stores' operating hours). Hard liquor, including the local liqueur *Taéngelé*, is sold only at government-run outlets, open from 11:00 to 18:00 Sunday through Thursday and 11:00 to 20:00 Friday and Saturday.

>>>>>[Mead? Did the man say mead? Wot's mead?]<<<<<

—Phil (00:47:48/2-24-54)

>>>>>[Mead, Phil(istine), is a sweet honey wine beloved of the Tir elves. It goes down smoothly, but the sugar hangover the next day is nigh onto crippling if you overimbibe.]<<<<<

—Erath (01:50 42/2-25-54)

>>>>>[*Taéngelé* deserves a mention among these learned comments. A distilled liqueur made of honey and anise; sweet, with a

pleasant bite of licorice, it's what ouzo always wanted to be when it grew up. I would describe it as full-bodied, with a healthy ethonol kick. Surprisingly, hangovers occur much less often with this liqueur than with mead. If you can obtain a dram or two of this nectar of the gods, you owe it to yourself to try it. Be warned, however, that the Tir does not export it (legally).]<<<<<

—Dionysus (02.46:08/2-25-54)

>>>>>[Sounds like *Xtabantun* from the Yucatan.]<<<<<

—Mayan Sot (11:31:53/2-25-54)

>>>>>[Truth be told, it's very like *Xtabantun*, M.S. But just a shade better.]<<<<<

—Dionysus (02:00:52/2-26-54)

The rules permit authorized visitors to carry two liters of wine or beer or one liter of spirits over the border, for personal consumption only.

Addictive substances, including tobacco, are stringently restricted. Tobacco is not illegal (yet), but can be purchased only at government-licensed outlets, and the buyer must be over 20 years of age.

>>>>>[For you few weed-heads out there, smoking is illegal in all public buildings; the no smoking sections are *everywhere*. Even in the open air, anyone offended by your clouds of carcinogenic emissions can ask you, backed by the full weight of the law, to butt out. Refusing to do so is a misdemeanor. Kudos to the Tir.]<<<<<

—Anti-Cancer (17:58:56/3-2-54)

Possession of controlled substances, including chips, constitutes a minor felony; possession with intent to deal is a major felony. The Tir rigorously enforces these laws and applies harsh penalties to the guilty.

>>>>>[The list of controlled substances stretches too far to go into here. As a general guideline, if it alters your mood significantly, it's controlled.]<<<<<

—Gibson Girl (13:58:51/3-1-54)

>>>>>[You've got to watch your chips, too. The definition of "controlled" is different in the Tir than in Seattle. In the UCAS, the key issue in determining a chip's legality is whether or not the simsense recording was filtered through an ASIST Peak Controller. If not, the recording is classified as a full-on BTL, and is illegal. Tir laws are even stricter. The amplitude on the peak controller must be cut *way* back. In the Tir, if a chip's amplitude (Δø, or delta phi) rises above 2.7, it's a no-no. (For definitions on this technoweenie babble, refer to *Shadowbeat*; it's on the BBS somewhere.)]<<<<<

—The Neon Dweeb (14:09:12/3-12-54)

>>>>>[I hear tell some group tried to run 2XS chips into the Tir. The Peace Force scanned it, and "vanished" the dealers. Poof, gone, just like that.]<<<<<

—Pat (05:38:10/3-17-54)

>>>>>[2XS?]<<<<<

—Color Me Curious (09:27:51/3-18-54)

>>>>>[DIR-X, minimal RAS override, no peak controller filtering, boost in the proprioceptive channels, plus subliminals—Δø over *15. The* electronic mindbender/mindgeeker. Nasty.]<<<<<

—The Neon Dweeb (12:14:40/3-20-54)

Emergencies

Tir Tairngire supports a national emergency vidphone system much like the 911 network in the UCAS. In the event of an emergency, simply enter 119 on any phone. An operator links you to the appropriate emergency service: Peace Force, medical, fire department, and so on.

>>>>>[119? Trust the elves to get it backwards...]<<<<<

—Bung (03:31:58/2-22-54)

Medical Services

Tir Tairngire provides its citizens with a socialized medical system, generating revenues by taxing each wage-earner for medical insurance premiums. The governmental Medical Services Plan (MSP) pays all health-care costs arising from injury or illness and pays all doctors' salaries, both those in private practice and those associated with hospitals. Citizens pay no out-of-pocket costs for basic health care, though patients must pay for prescribed medications. Medications given in the course of hospital or clinic care, however, are paid for by MSP.

MSP also operates the emergency ambulance service, which responds to 119 calls. The ambulance service takes patients to the nearest hospital that offers the required treatment.

Cybernetic or vat-tissue replacement limbs and organs are provided as part of the MSP program, but only at the base level of replacement. The government funds transimplants to replace

body parts that no longer function, but will not pay for enhancements. If a patient wants to obtain a specific replacement technology or to enhance an organ or limb, he or she must pay the cost differential. (In this sense, the government considers transimplants beyond basic functioning to be "elective surgery." As always, the patient pays for elective procedures.)

Visitors to the Tir must pay a 500 nuyen per week premium into the MSP for the length of their stay upon entry into the nation. No reciprocity of services or cross-billing arrangements exist between Tir Tairngire's MSP and any private or national health insurer in any other country, such as DocWagon™ in the UCAS or the National Health Service in the United Kingdom. For as long as his or her MSP premiums last, a visitor receives the same high level of care enjoyed by all Tir citizens. No private health insurance companies operate in Tir Tairngire.

>>>>>[Which means that if you want any kind of medical assistance while in the Tir, you've got to pay the guvmint, which lets them know you're in the country. Not a good option for people walking the shadowy side of the street, right?

So what do you do? Licensed clinics and hospitals do not accept direct payment except for "elective procedures," and even then you've got to prove you've got MSP coverage. Individual docs *might* take cash on the barrelhead to stitch you up, but expect to be gouged deeply: if a doc gets caught freelancing, he'll be up on a felony charge, with the minimum penalty being the loss of his license to practice. So you've got to pay him enough to balance his risk. Some shadow clinics do biz in the Tir, but the Peace Force maintains a constant lookout for them, closing them down as soon as they find them and throwing the operators in the slammer.

And beware—the Peace Force is so jazzed on this issue that they sometimes set up fake shadow clinics just to sting shadowrunners and other illegal visitors.]<<<<<

—Doc Dicer (14:47:25/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Ambulance response time is roughly equivalent to DocWagon™ Gold coverage. Overall, the quality of care equals the best in Seattle...unless you're a mage. The licensed practitioners don't try too hard to avoid invasive treatments for magically adept patients. If you're a mage or shaman and you get drek-kicked, make sure the docs find out right away, and be ready to pay "elective procedure" fees for gentler handling.

The MSP is not a direct equivalent of Doc Wagon. When paramedics come, they don't bring guns. Sorry, chummers.]<<<<<

—Hippocrates (02:34:40/3-29-54)

>>>>>[What about "emergency" legal representation? Is there any equivalent to the ACLU?]<<<<<

—Collins (15:34.02/4-2-54)

>>>>>[In the Tir? Don't make me laugh. Your best bet is to call your consulate—if the Peace Force lets you make a phone call.]<<<<<

—Legal Beagle (11:06:52/4-5-54)

>>>>>[I must speak here for the Tir in the cause of fairness. Despite the impression this section promotes, the Tir is not a fascist state. Granted, the Peace Force enjoys far-reaching powers, and the Tir does not recognize any document resembling the old USA's Bill of Rights, but the bottom line is that the Peace Force functions as a police force. They are empowered to take action when they believe laws have been or are about to be violated. And yes, they do deal harshly with offenders, but that's the price one pays for violating the public trust. If you live within the law, you have nothing to fear.]<<<<<

—Aegis (09:51:49/4-6-54)

>>>>>[Naive, Aegis, very naive.]<<<<<

—Legal Beagle (10:34:42/4-7-54)

PORTLAND

Portland serves as the interface between Tir Tairngire and the rest of the world. This city provides the nation's only opportunity for visitors to work, and then only for brief periods of time. All trade between the Tir and other nations takes place in and is transported through Portland.

>>>>>[This bit of the file's out of date. As of 2052, the Tir de-emphasized Portland's importance as a major trading hub. Today, a lot of the nation's trade goes through Seattle. (A sweet deal for the elves, I say, because it means the UCAS pays for maintaining the infrastructure the elves use)]<<<<<

—Ryushu (12:05:38/3-1-54)

>>>>>[Elves out of Seattle. We want no contact with the Tir.]<<<<<

—Chief Seattle (08:31 06/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Frag that drek. Tir trade represents much-needed money in the pockets of Seattle dockworkers and their families. We got the biz because we're more efficient than the slots in Portland, and we're going to keep it.]<<<<<

—TUC (07:12:27/3-5-54)

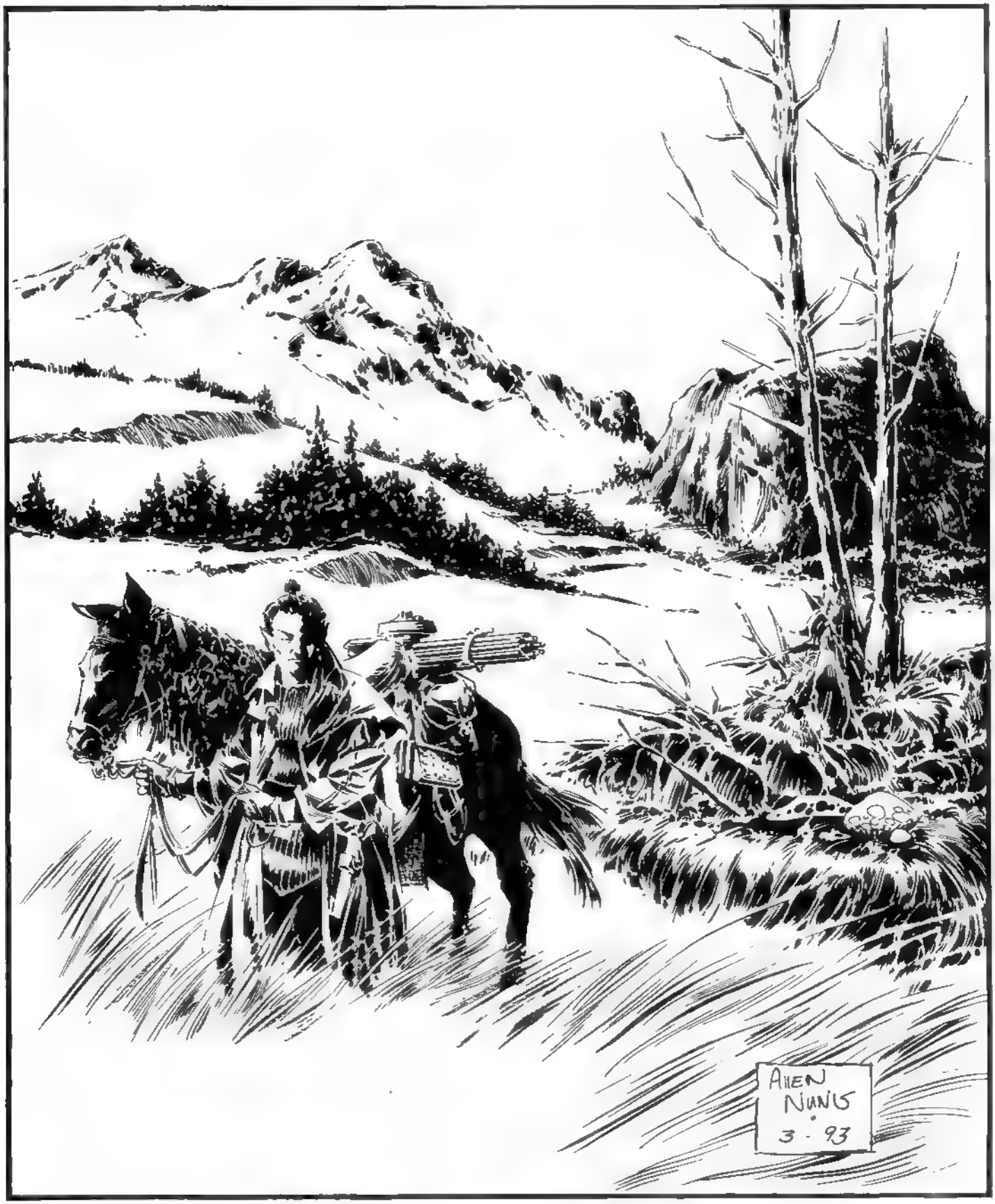
>>>>>[What this means for you more nefarious chummers is that because Seattle serves as the Tir's principal port, whatever they want comes into Seattle and must then be transported south into the elven nation. How? Truck convoys, rail, and smaller automated container vessels set up to interface with the lower-volume Portland facilities. And this means opportunities for illicit entry.]<<<<<

—In and Out Specialist (13:41:28/3-5-54)

Portland is surrounded by a wall, similar to the Berlin Wall constructed just under a century ago in Germany. Movement between Portland and the rest of the Tir is controlled by heavily armed and well-guarded checkpoint stations. The largest of these, nicknamed "Checkpoint Charlie," stands where Highway 5 meets Durham in West Portland. <<**block delete: 2.2 Kp**>>

>>>>>[Again, I've cut the rest of the tourist advisory drek. I've dropped in a more detailed tourist file on Portland farther along in this document. Check that for more background.]<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (16:10:37/2-12-54)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GEOGRAPHY

Tir Tairngire is an independent sovereign nation located on the west coast of North America, roughly covering the area that was once the state of Oregon. Its total land-mass is approximately 266,750 square kilometers, including more than 1,500 square kilometers of inland water surface.

Tir Tairngire's national boundary follows the border of 20th-century Oregon in the north, continuing as far east as Grangeville in Idaho. From there, the border angles toward the southwest, traveling twelve kilometers west of Boise, where it reaches the Black Rock Desert in the former state of Nevada. From there, it heads almost directly west, passing through the town of Redding, in the old state of California.

>>>>>[That's the border officially claimed by TT, boys and girls. And, as we all know, the gap between "official" and "real" can be pretty fragging wide.

It's kinda funny, if your sense of humor has the right twist. TT claims land as far south as Redding. CalFree claims that its border stretches as far north as Yreka. And, as you all know, Yreka is north of Redding. Which means—

Yep, a wide area of no-man's-land—a neutral buffer zone, an unofficial DMZ. (To learn how all this came down, check the history file. To read it is to laugh. . .)

So, which is right? TT's claimed border at Redding? CalFree's claimed border at Yreka? The best fragging answer is to look for TT's vaunted "twin line of death" border fence. It's...(drumroll, and the envelope please) just south of Yreka. BUZZ! Thanks for playing, TT.]<<<<<

—Bung (18:59:26/3-27-54)

Its topography divides Tir Tairngire into two distinct regions. The larger of these occupies slightly more than half of the nation and consists of arid tablelands covered with rugged mountainous outcroppings. The average elevation of the tableland region rises to approximately 1,500 meters, and the region is bounded on the west by the Cascade Mountains.

The coastal region of Tir Tairngire is the nation's most fertile area. Of the many tree-covered mountains, the highest is Mount Hood, near the northern border Tir Tairngire holds with the Salish-Shidhe. Its peak elevation currently stands at 3,374 meters (more than 100 meters lower than before the eruption of August 17, 2017, a phenomenon now attributed to Daniel Howling Coyote's Great Ghost Dance).

>>>>>[I recently happened across some GAIASAT radar mapping data. (It wasn't what I was after, but it wasn't bolted down....) According to a scan taken on January 13, 2053, the peak of Mount Hood is 3,387.3 meters above sea level. So what, you say? So the data given above is off by 13 meters.

But according to a GAIASAT scan run on December 22, 2044, the elevation of Hood's peak was 3,211.1 meters.

And so, chummers, the question is this: what makes a mountain grow more than 170 meters—*the height of a 40-story building*—in eight years?

Hasn't anyone else noticed this? *Why is nobody talking about it?*]<<<<<

—Boone (15:55:43/2-27-54)

>>>>>[Um, Boone, if a mountain is still active then growth is normal. Lava churned out adds to the mountain's size, and the mountain could be expanding from internal pressure (a sure sign of a potential eruption). Could be a lot of reasons, and most of them are mundane.]<<<<<

—Geologist George (02:43:50/3-1-54)

Highway 5, the major north-south route through Tir Tairngire, roughly follows the Willamette River. The Willamette Valley serves as the nation's breadbasket, providing most of the Tir's food crops. The farmers cultivate approximately 75 percent of the arable area using mostly traditional techniques. They cultivate the remainder using high-technology, high-intensity techniques, including forced germination, hydroponics, and biogenetic stimulus.

>>>>>[Yeah—the crystal-wavers and back-to-the-landers, on their 75 percent of the land, raise only *10 percent* of the total yield, at a per-kilo cost *three times* that of the return produced by the right-thinkers. What price organic, huh?]<<<<<

—Technocrat (11.11:41/3-10-54)

>>>>>[At least our harvest is brought forth as a gift from bountiful mother Gaia, and nourishes every level of our being.]<<<<<

—Starlight (20:12:43/3-12-54)

>>>>>[. . .If you get to it before the bugs do.]<<<<<

—Technocrat (13:49:04/3-15-54)

>>>>>[Ya know, Starlight, you back-to-the-lander flower children really tick me off. You want to know why? I'll tell you why.

Back when we first heard this back-to-the-land, say-no-to-technology drek in the 1980s or '90s, the population of "spaceship Earth" was pushing 5 billion plus. The only thing keeping the bloated population fed was advanced technology—wizzer fertilizers, pesticides, genetically engineered nitrogen-fixing grains, hydroponics, and so on and so on. And there you were, Starlight—you or your ideological forbears—preaching "back to the land," and carping about every technological advance that let us squeeze an extra ton of food out of the available arable land, or keep an extra ton from going bad before it hit people's tables. So what happens, Starlight, if we take your drek-mucking suggestion, hm? The available arable land can support a population of maybe a couple of billion without technological intervention, and every family would have to farm, because there would be no way to keep food fresh until it was shipped somewhere else. *So what happens to the extra three billion people already born, Starlight?* They starve, that's what.

And today? We're in the same soup, only it's not quite as hot. VITAS-3 chopped the population down, that's true, but a drekload of keen and dedicated breeders have been popping kids and filling the world back up. If we took your suggestion today, only a billion people would starve.

Which billion, Starlight? Point them out to me. Make a list. Would your name be on it? The names of your friends, your family? No, of course not.

You wrap yourself up in holier-than-thou rhetoric, but what you really want to be is the Chooser of the Slain.]<<<<<

—DNF (16:22 43/3-16-54)

>>>>>[Yow, he do go on a bit, don't he?]<<<<<

—Lancer (10:16:25/3-19-54)

Forests cover fully 80 percent of Tir Tairngire's land area. This includes those areas largely deforested during the late 19th and 20th centuries, but also certain areas, like that between The Dalles and Pendleton, traditionally considered too arid or infertile to support forestation. Certainly, these tableland areas and the "High Desert" east of Bend never had large stands of trees earlier than the 21st century.

>>>>>[This ain't no lie. What used to be called the Ochoco and the Umatilla National Forests have spread north and west into the north central tablelands. I don't know how it's possible, because the land just isn't fertile enough to grow forests.]<<<<<

—Jack Sprat (23:20:42/3-1-54)

>>>>>[There's more to it than a change in the soil, chummers. Take a look at the forests around Salem and Albany, areas that suffered from heavy logging before the U.S. fell apart. The trees there look like old-growth forest—exactly like the national forests that were never logged, or that hadn't been logged since 1900. Sure, many of those areas were replanted as the logging stopped, but following the mindset of the time, the new plantings all belonged to the same tree species. Walk through the forests surrounding Albany today (assuming you can get into the Tir, of course), and you'll see trees that look like they're more than a century old, of all different species.]<<<<<

—Bunyan (07:27:04/3 9-54)

>>>>>[The answer's the same to both questions. *Magic*, chummers. Plain and simple. You know how them elves are.]<<<<<

—Southam (18:01:35/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Hmph. The minute a person picks up on an anomaly associated with Tir Tairngire, she automatically invokes magic as the solution without a second thought. Even in the Tir, mages represent a tiny minority of the population. Scientists outnumber mages in the nation. Is it not far more logical to lay the credit at the door of highly advanced Tir Tairngire science?]<<<<<

—Elizabeth (20 20 31/3-23-54)

>>>>>[Even better, combine the two. Magic plus tech. (Ooooh, scary. . .)]<<<<<

—Abby (23.32.26/3-24-54)

Tir Tairngire hosts many species of wildlife, including deer, antelope, elk, gray wolves, panthers, black bears, coyotes, raccoons, beavers, muskrats, rabbits and squirrels. In addition, many species of paranormal animals ("paranimals") roam free within the nation. The most abundant species include the blood kite, century ferret, gabriel hound, hell hound, martichoras and mist lynx.

>>>>>[*And* agropelters and bandersnatches (bandersnatchi?) and birdmen and other really nasty bleeders. What is it, do the elves think these things are *cute*?]<<<<<

—DeeTee (09:41:13/2-19-54)

>>>>>[Not "cute," but part of the same ecosystem that gave rise to *Homo sapiens nobilis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens*, and thus worthy of the same right to life.]<<<<<

—Keeper (03:55 05/2-21-54)

>>>>>[The file says there are panthers and gray wolves in Tir Tairngire. And it's right, I've seen them myself. *But both those species are extinct, jokers!* Declared extinct by the World Wildlife Protection Fund in 2003 (panthers) and 2009 (gray wolf). Extinction is forever. So what are they doing here?

Are they cunning illusions or simulacra? Hallucinations? Elves in furry suits? Or are the elves doing some pretty extensive cloning? And if so, where did they get the necessary tissue samples?

Could they have genetically constructed wolves and panthers from the ground up?]<<<<<

—Sally G (16:49:34/3-18-54)

>>>>>[Categorically impossible. Maybe the World Wildlife Protection Fund missed some when it was counting?]<<<<<

—Reality Czech (23:14:50/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Both those creatures went extinct in the early 21st century, a number of years *after* the technology necessary to maintain a viable (clonable) tissue sample proved workable. If someone thought far enough ahead, present-day clones of these animals are certainly conceivable]<<<<<

—Mr. Petrie (09:18:51/3-23-54)

>>>>>[You know, some elves (and others) view every strand of DNA as nothing more than part of a giant Bio-Lego™ set. Think about it.]<<<<<

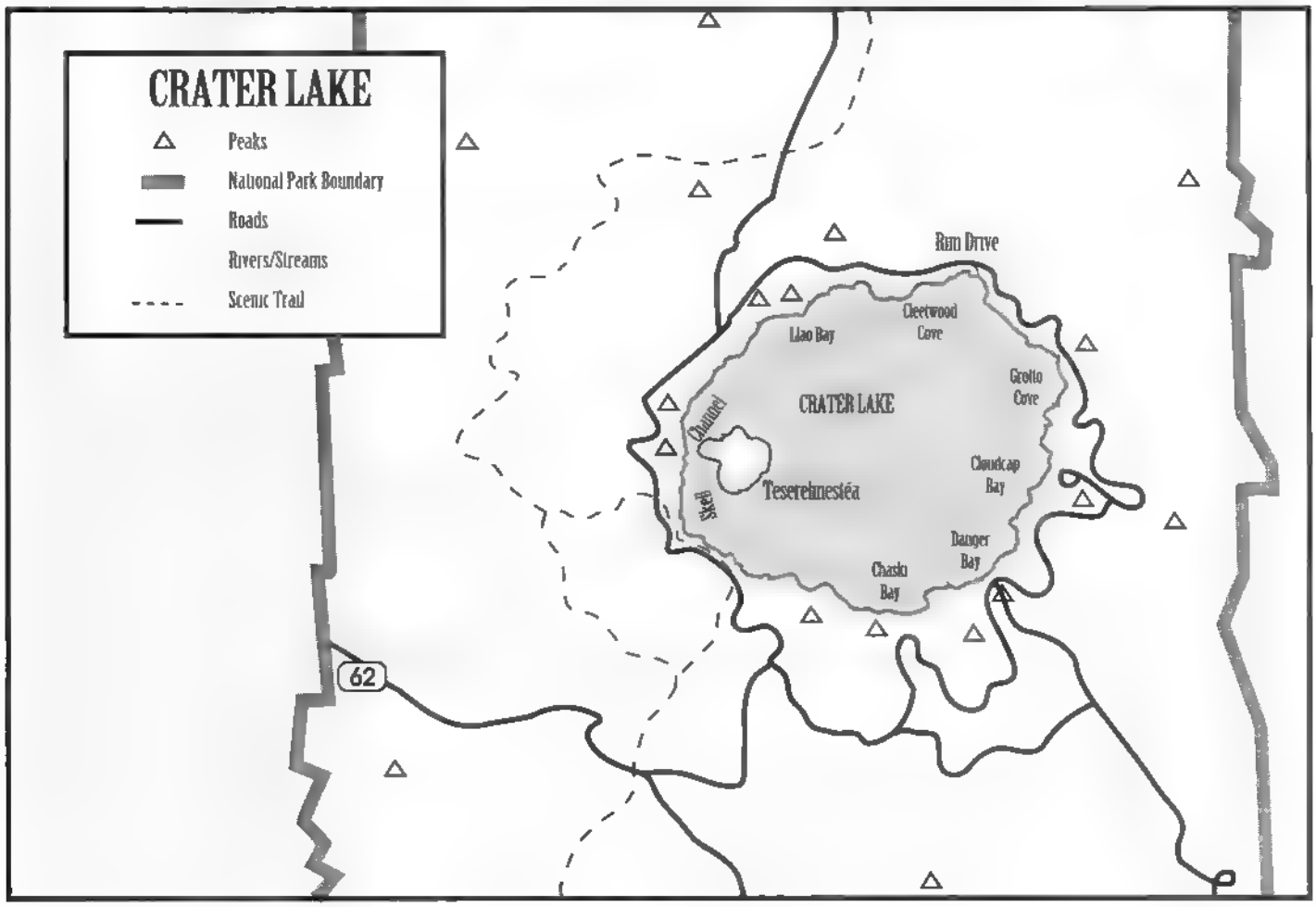
—Building Block (21:45:52/3-27-54)

CRATER LAKE

Perhaps the most fascinating geographical feature in Tir Tairngire is Crater Lake. On the crest of the Cascade mountain range, just north of Klamath Lake, Crater Lake fills the crater of an extinct volcano. The lake measures approximately 9.7 kilometers in diameter and 42 kilometers in circumference, and sinks to a maximum depth of 610 meters. The surface of the lake rises nearly 1,878 meters above sea level; the lava cliffs surrounding the lake climb another 150 to 600 meters higher. A small island rests in the center of the lake. Originally called Wizard Island, it has been officially renamed *Tesetelinestéa* (no translation for this name has ever been given).

According to the most widely accepted reconstruction of its origin, Crater Lake formed when a volcanic eruption destroyed a mountain that the best estimates claim stood more than 3,650 meters high. Geologists cannot agree on when the eruption occurred, but *Tesetelinestéa* is thought to be the remnants of the collapsed volcanic peak.

Crater Lake functions as the closest thing Tir Tairngire has to a national park. Access to the area is not restricted or controlled in any way, but many Tir Tairngire elves revere Crater Lake, assigning it some kind of mystical significance.



>>>>>[Hordes of know-nothings swarm over the place on each solstice. Go figure.]<<<<<

—Yang (12:05:19/2-27-54)

>>>>>[I hear some people believe the lake water has magical properties.]<<<<<

—Cratinus (02:13:13/3-2-54)

>>>>>[NO! Granted, its constantly shifting multiple hues and intensities of blue are beautiful, but it holds no magic.]<<<<<

—Lee (19:52 34/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Rumor says that the Tir government discovered deposits of orichalcum near Crater Lake. Wait—before you get your karma in a spin and dump me, just let me say that I know that's impossible. But the street buzz is bandering it. If this is some kind of disinformation campaign, what's the point?]<<<<<

—Hogge Wilde (08:09:47/3-7-54)

>>>>>[I've worked out a possible translation for *Tesetelinestéa*; "Skull of the Dragon." Does that mean anything to anyone?]<<<<<

—Shaeffer (16:29:07/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Ever heard of Lacrima? He's something of a celebrity around the Tir, a self-styled "mago-historian." He's apparently a bit of a flake: spouting flashes of brilliance interspersed with periods of complete lunacy. Occasional stunning insights mixed in with spates of drivel. A month rarely goes by without old Lacrima appearing on the trid to rant about one thing or another. The elves generally handle him like a nutter uncle. they go along with him, even when he's off his rocker, but keep an eye on him in case he hurts himself

Anyway, Lacrima's been doing some kind of research at Crater Lake. A week back he announced he knew exactly when the volcano erupted to form the lake, and could prove it. His date is 3454 B.C., July 22, 09.35 hours!

Usually when Lacrima spouts something weird, scientists line up to denounce him. This time, though, the scientific community is responding with total silence. Make of that what you will.]<<<<<

—Media Watcher (21:24:00/4-27-54)

>>>>>[Heavy happenings around Crater Lake! This went down on May 2—soon after Lacrima's latest babble, but I don't know if there's any connection.

All access to Crater Lake's been sealed off. The military has moved in and turned it into a zero zone, which means nothing and

nobody gets in and lives, without half a dozen high-level authorizations. Heavily armed troopers cover the area from every angle, along with combat mages, paranormal watchcritters, watcher spirits, and other arcane hangers-on. A dozen drones constantly patrol the air over the lake, watching for uninvited guests, and one (possibly two) F-B Eagles maintain a constant orbit overhead.

I don't know what the frag's going on, but it's serious drek. I advise runners to stay away from this area—it's too secure to penetrate. If you do try, and you get geeked, don't come back to haunt me.]<<<<<

—Genghis (17:44:21/5-5-54)

>>>>>[The area may be secure from the ground and the air, but you can bet that every nation in the world with recon satellite capability knows what's going on.]<<<<<

—Atris (09:23:45/5-6-54)

>>>>>[Not true, Atris. The elves covered that angle too. Every recon satellite that comes over the horizon takes a laser right in the sensors until Crater Lake's no longer in its footprint. The laser's not powerful enough to damage anything, but it's bright enough to dazzle sensors. (The technique's old hat; the Sovs and the Americans used to do it to each other way back in the 1980s.)

The elves also flash suborbitals and semiballistics as they pass over, fully aware of how easy it is to mount a sensor pack on the hull of an SO or SB. Whatever's going on, they aren't taking any chances.]<<<<<

—Genghis (23:49.24/5-6-54)

>>>>>[Hot flash! A Sioux-registered airbus went down in the Crater Lake area. Engine failure, servo systems failure, crashed and burned on impact, no survivors.

That's the official news line. The truth is, the plane was a Sioux military scout that came too close to Crater Lake, so the elves splashed it with a missile. Neither Sioux nor Tir is saying anything about the incident, but you can bet tensions between the two nations just went through the roof. More news as I hear it.]<<<<<

—Genghis (00:09:52/5-8-54)

>>>>>[I went close to the lake recently, and saw some of what the elves are up to. Big things—stuff the size of apartment blocks—floating in the fragging air over the central island. And elementals and spirits flashing everywhere, just going apedrek.]<<<<<

—Tolly (08:21:45/5-09-54)

>>>>>[Sounds like *bull*drek to me.]<<<<<

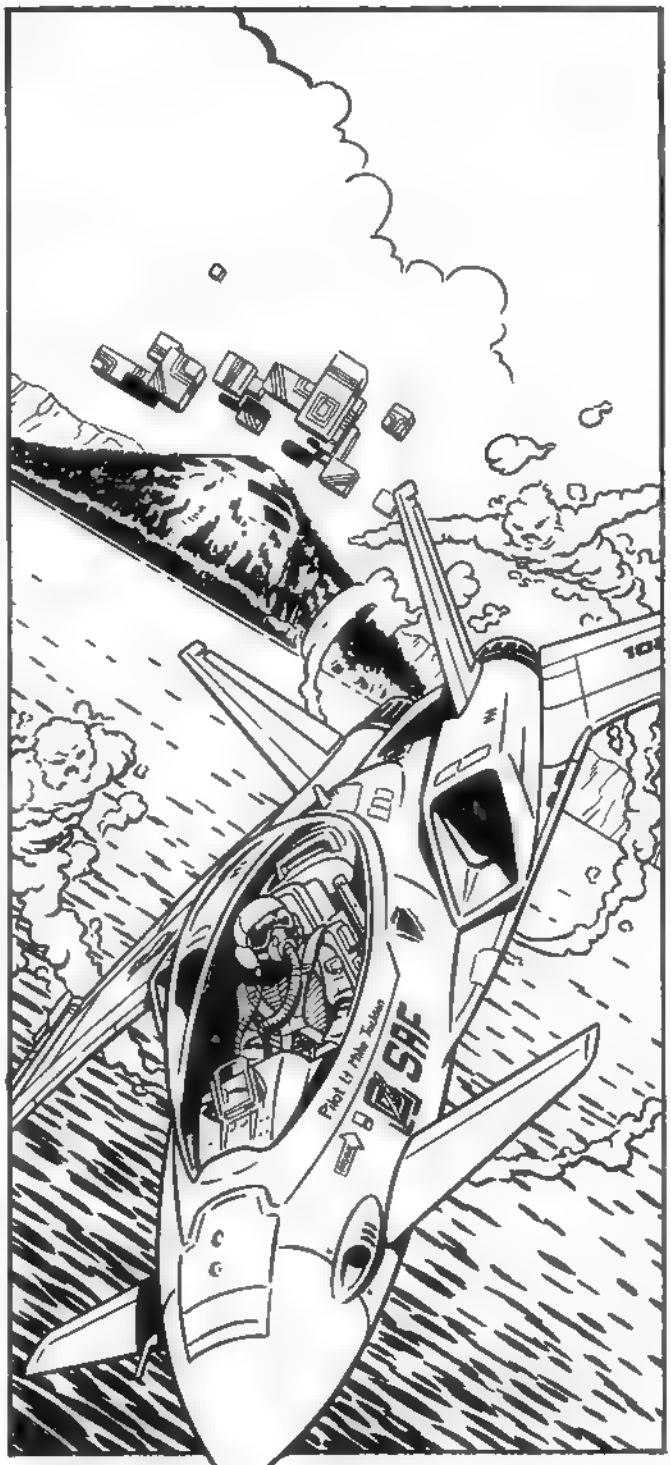
—Brewster (13:12:56/5-09-54)

>>>>>[So where's the insightful comments from our insiders Aegis and The Laughing Man? Huh, chummer? Zappenin'?]<<<<<

—Bleys (12:54:19/5-10-54)

>>>>>[I could make a helpful comment here. . .]<<<<<

—The Big "D" (02 51·56/5-11-54)



>>>>>[*Sae'retar!*]<<<<<

—The Laughing Man (04:09:39/5-11-54)

>>>>>[Fine. Be that way.]<<<<<

—The Big "D" (07:34:18/5-11-54)

HOW IT CAME TO BE

SETTING THE STAGE

The events of the years 2009 to 2018 need no review. Everyone alive today knows the history of the Lone Eagle incident, the subsequent relocation of the Amerindians to "Re-Education Camps," the Genocide Campaign, the Great Ghost Dance, and the Treaty of Denver. Everyone is familiar with the breakup and consolidation of the United States and Canada, and the forming of the Native American Nations.

Far fewer people know of the events leading to the creation of Tir Tairngire. This situation is hardly surprising. Most of those events took place masked by impenetrable cloaks of secrecy that have yet to be lifted. Most Tir citizens know the general events, but even they remain unaware of the specifics. Those involved took great care when revealing such sensitive information and continue to hide the deepest extent of their involvement in events.

The territory that is now Tir Tairngire originally belonged to the Salish-Shidhe Council nation. From its formation in 2018 to around 2023, Salish-Shidhe was less a true nation than a loosely knit confederation of distinct tribes—the Makah, the Salish, the Cascade Crow, and others. In the southern region of the Council, formerly Oregon, the reconstituted Modoc and Shoshone tribes dominated. These tribes numbered fewer than their northern brethren, however, and had been more seriously disrupted by the U.S. government's re-education program.

>>>>>[In fact, most of the Shoshone and Modoc tribal leadership died in a "tragic accident" in the Warm Springs Re-Education Camp. Fragging Anglos. Getting a jump on the Genocide Campaign, huh?]<<<<<
—Shoshone Warrior (10:52:48/3-1-54)

>>>>>[Ease up a little on that, chummer. First, it's a long time ago, and the Warm Springs "Education Personnel" are serving time for war crimes Second, the fire that took out the tribal leaders was an accident, and nobody's found any evidence to the contrary. It was a bad break, but that's the way it goes.]<<<<<
—Martha (21:05:22/3-14-54)

>>>>>[So much for the touristy drek, except for some detailed stuff on the Tir's big cities later on. From here on in, most of the data is the files Spes dumped for us. Enjoy, and learn.]<<<<<
—Captain Chaos (13:51:54/2-04-54)

These two factors gave the Shoshone and Modoc little real influence on the government of the Salish-Shidhe nation. In addition, political, social, and economic influence all were concentrated in the hands of the tribes of the northern region of the nation, in the area that used to be Washington State. This imbalance occurred primarily through the two waves of the VITAS epidemic that drastically depopulated the entire Oregon area, mainly because fully 90 percent of the region's population was concentrated in the "urban belt" running from Portland in the north to Eugene in the south. The relocation of most Anglos from the nation only exacerbated the situation.

The key tribal representatives on the Salish-Shidhe Council during the nation's formative years were Harold Jim (Salish), Martin Strong (Makah), George Moosejaw (Nootka), and Walter Bright Water (Cascade Crow). Of

these, the most interesting was Walter Bright Water.

Walter Bright Water's history remains a mystery. He apparently sprang full-grown onto the political stage. He arrived in the Cascade Crow region of Salish-Shidhe in 2019, the year after that nation signed the Treaty of Denver, claiming to have been incarcerated at the Pyramid Lake Re-Education Center located in what was once Nevada. He claimed that his parents, wife, and children had all been there as well, but died when cholera swept through the camp in early 2017. No records document his presence there, or the presence of anyone with the name Bright Water, but that is hardly surprising: a terrorist attack on the Pyramid Lake camp in 2018 destroyed the camp's computer system.

>>>>>[How convenient...]<<<<<
—Rex (11:24:47/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Are you trying to say something?]<<<<<
—Planet Janet (23:09:32/3-26-54)

Without access to his personal records, Walter Bright Water could not prove his claim to membership in the Cascade Crow tribe. People who orally examined Bright Water in reference to his tribal claim, however, discovered that the man knew everything about Cascade Crow traditions, ceremonies, history, rituals, and so on; more, in fact, than many of his examiners. At that point, they accepted him with little question, still flush with victory after the successful removal of the Anglos. Walter Bright Water quickly made his mark on Cascade Crow society. While ineligible to be named a chief because he could not officially prove his bloodline, he was named as representative to the Salish-Shidhe Council in 2021 in recognition of his service to the tribe. He quickly proved a firebrand in debates, and a strong supporter of the Cascade Crow's position in the nation. He served on the Council for seven consecutive years—the longest uninterrupted tenure for any tribal representative. Also contrary to the trend of the moment, he apparently failed to keep a personal diary or journal, and never published or otherwise disseminated his private thoughts and memoirs.

All we know about the Walter Bright Water of 2028 and his actions in the subsequent years comes from the records of Council meetings. He watched the prejudice against metahumans, and saw the failed attempts to desegregate the nation and integrate metahumans into human society. Even so, it came as a great surprise to citizens of the Salish-Shidhe nation, both human and metahuman, when Bright Water frequently spoke *against* desegregation. Many of his speeches on this topic remain on record, and his more impassioned debates are taught within the Tir Tairngire school system. He believed that full integration of the Awakened races with humanity could only result in harm for everyone concerned. Segregation, he believed, was the only logical and compassionate choice.

At the same time, he argued strongly for the Salish-Shidhe Council and the other Native American Nations to welcome the metahuman races into their territory. At the time, these two positions seemed to represent a strange contradiction, and none of Bright Water's contemporaries managed to reconcile the divergent attitudes. Yet so strong was Bright Water's support for welcoming metahumans that, in early 2029, the Salish-Shidhe Council officially accepted it as a tenet of the nation. Later that same year, the Sovereign Tribal Council of the Native American Nations adopted the same position as part of the NAN charter. Soon after, many of the first generation UGE elves, now coming of age in the S-S Council, moved to the Mount Rainier area and formed a separate tribe they called the Sinsearach. Dwarves, orks, and trolls also migrated to the area, but in smaller numbers.

Shortly thereafter, Walter Bright Water announced his retirement from the Salish-Shidhe Council, giving as his reason a recent diagnosis of terminal cancer. In the wake of much public sympathy and support, Walter Bright Water dropped from sight, but not before making a final public statement. Obviously already in poor health, Bright Water urged the metahuman population of the S-S Council to segregate themselves in the southern regions of the nation. This powerful, moving speech would have profound social and political repercussions for decades, perhaps centuries.

His death was announced half a year later, and Portland mounted a lavish funeral and memorial service. As mysterious in death as he was in life, Bright Water left no family, bequeathing his estate to a public trust dedicated to supporting a separate elven community in the Oregon area.

IMMIGRATION

By the time of Bright Water's death, the borders of the Salish Shidhe Council and all other Native American Nations stood open to metahumans, regardless of their racial background. While the Salish-Shidhe continued to guard itself jealously against the return of human Anglos, non-Amerinds of all metahuman races were free to enter.

Many did, fleeing the anti-metahuman bias of the predominately Anglo nations. Most came from the nations less accepting of racial differences: the Confederate American States, California Free State, and Québec, though many also emigrated from the UCAS. Many of the new immigrants answered Walter Bright Water's "clarion call"—as some of the more lurid datafaxes referred to it—and headed for the Oregon region of the Council. Fewer orks and trolls accepted his invitation, their racial nature biasing them toward more urban areas. Though Portland and the other cities of long ago Oregon still existed, they were so scarcely populated that the areas had become essentially rural.

This wave of immigration coincided with the final decay of the Shoshone and Modoc tribes. Slowly and quietly, for the past decade, the young members of those two tribes turned away from the lifestyles of their forefathers, lured by the siren song of the more urban north. Shoshone and Modoc populations in the south dropped steadily until, in 2030, both tribes finally accepted the inevitable. The councils of both tribes moved north and integrated themselves into the larger and more dynamic Salish and Makah tribal regions. Some Shoshone and Modoc individuals remained behind, of course, but the year 2030 marked the end of both tribes as distinct societies. That left most of what had been Oregon to the metahumans.

THE PROMISE

Other charismatic individuals came to the fore when Walter Bright Water died, hoping to fill the vacuum his passing left. Among those individuals were three young elves who later became major figures in Tir Tairngire: Aithne Oakforest, Sean Laverty, and Lugh Surehand. As did Walter Bright Water, these three appeared as if by magic. To this day, nobody knows where they were born, or anything of their lives prior to 2030, though speculation abounds. (I will deal with several popular theories in later sections.) Considering the rate of child abandonment following the initial UGE in 2011, lack of information on these men's early lives proves nothing. However, the mass media's failing to examine their backgrounds at any point is remarkable. This document provides the first in-depth look at the activities and histories of these three men and their compatriots.

Oakforest and Laverty were the prime movers in the 2031 drive to reoccupy the Council's southern cities and turn them back into vibrant urban areas. They communicated with engineers, scientists, and technicians in other nations—dealing almost exclusively with elves, though no one noticed at the time—and invited them to be part of the "great design," the renaissance of southern Salish-Shidhe. Most of those they invited eventually came, bringing with them high levels of technical expertise and great determination

Surehand, in contrast, focused his efforts on the social aspects of this disparate group of metahumans, welding the immigrants into a new society. Several informative books cover this period, providing far more detail than I can include in this document. Any who are interested should read *New Dawn* by Marion FitzWalter, *Rebirth* by Dannen Imbrahay, and *The Promise*, Lugh Surehand's own memoirs of his part in history. More needs to be said, and will, about the construction and origins of the culture and society that Surehand designed for the Tir. For the moment, suffice it to say that Surehand became the first mayor of Portland following the upheaval created by the nation's declaration of independence, and local ruler of the Oregon area in all but name. Surehand maintained no direct contact with the Salish-Shidhe Council during the renaissance, instead sending a representative of the "southern tribe" to keep the Council up to date. As it turned out, this representative—one Mealla Oakforest, wife of Aithne Oakforest—failed to tell the Council much, and told them nothing of what they needed to know. The Council itself, blinkered by its members' distaste for metahumans and Anglos, generally ignored the goings-on in the south.

Around this time another important elf appeared on the scene. His arrival was low key, but he would become much more significant later on. This mysterious elf is known as Ehran the Scribe. No records exist of his birth and early life, and the reasons for his appearance in Portland remain unknown. Those who knew of him knew him only as one of Lugh Surehand's closest advisors and friends. The most significant action he took at this point was to stay out of the limelight.

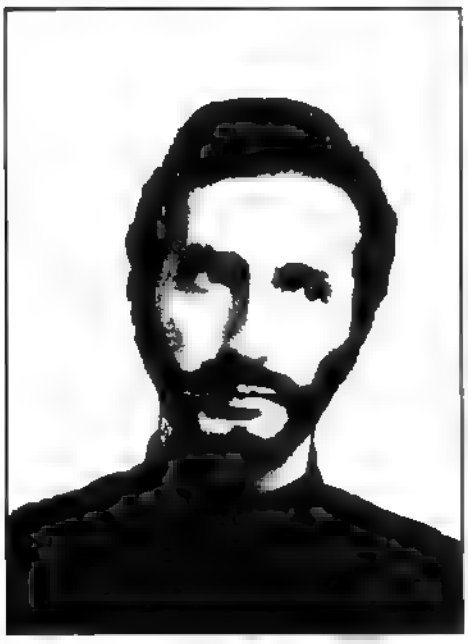
>>>>>[So what's all the mystery? Ehran's just some scientific-humanist writer. I read his *Mankind Ascendant* when it first came out in 2043. (Its logic had holes big enough to buzz a panzer through, but that's neither here nor there.) Probably keeps his background secret because it gives him an aura of mystery, which in turn helps his book sales.]<<<<<

—Rankin (10:05:57/2-16-54)

>>>>>[Read on a little further, Rankin, and see if you still feel that way.]<<<<<

—Broadbent (03:18 34/2-19-54)

Today everyone in Tir Tairngire, and many people elsewhere in the world, knows what Ehran looks like—a tall, slender elf, clean-shaven, with blond hair and eyes that pierce like an eagle's. If anyone has noticed the resemblance between Ehran and Walter Bright Water, they have chosen not to discuss it publicly...*until now.*



Please examine the images above. The first is of Walter Bright Water in 2027. His dark hair is thick, and he is wearing his trademark full beard.

The second image, scanned from a Tir Tairngire datafax, shows an enlarged photograph of Ehran the Scribe. Careful comparison reveals the similarities between this image and that of Bright Water, but the beard and hair make those similarities difficult to detect.

Now examine the third image. This is a computer-altered version of the first image, showing Walter Bright Water without a beard and wearing the shorter haircut favored by Ehran the Scribe. The similarities in facial shape and structure, the shape of the eyes and nose are obvious, and so profound that it becomes immediately obvious Ehran and Walter Bright Water are one and the same person!

>>>>>[Bulldrek. They do look alike, but I think *all* dandelion-eaters look alike.]<<<<<
—Masher (14 00:15/3-11-54)

>>>>>[You bigoted trog goat...]<<<<<
—Laertes (18:01:56/3-13-54)

>>>>>[So what's Spes saying? Ehran, the bigwig in the Tir, pretended to be Bright Water so he could push the Salish-Shidhe Council into opening the borders to metahumans...so he could get all the elves together and eventually set up Tir Tairngire? That's ridiculous. .isn't it?]<<<<<
—Opus (14:42 41/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Maybe not. Elves tend to take the long view. That makes them particularly dangerous.]<<<<<
—Toshisue (20:11:12/3-14-54)

>>>>>[But Walter Bright Water wasn't an elf. It's obvious even from the pictures included in this file. On top of that, I met Bright Water in person once, and his build is completely different than Ehran's. This is silly]<<<<<
—Opus (12:54:42/3-15-54)

>>>>>[Plus, if Ehran was Bright Water (Hey! What about the other way around?) Bright Water/Ehran was already in his thirties when he worked with the Salish. No way he could have been born in 2011.]<<<<<
—Gavim (03:15:51/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Well, you've probably read the rest of the file by now Gavim, so you know how this could be so]<<<<<
—Spes (01:17:02/3-21-54)

Why the deception? Why the elaborate charade transforming Bright Water into Ehran? The answer is simple: the foundations of Tir Tairngire needed to be laid long before the emerging elven population would be old enough to bring it about themselves. Bright Water, being human, was the perfect tool to sow the seeds: who would imagine an elven conspiracy spearheaded by a human?

As for the reason behind the conspiracy, again the answer is simple: political power

INDEPENDENCE

Under the influence of Oakforest, Laverty, and Surehand, and quietly encouraged by the mysterious Ehran the Scribe, the Portland-Salem-Eugene axis underwent a profound renaissance. In less than four years, the population of the urban axis rose from virtually zero to nearly one million

>>>>>[Impossible.]<<<<<
—Luke (04:05:15/3-10-54)

>>>>>[It happened, *omae*. No arguing with that.]<<<<<
—Droog (08:33:00/3-14-54)

The elves reestablished the entire infrastructure of the cities, power grids, communications, sanitation, water, transportation, and so on. The immigrants Surehand recruited applied the cutting edge of civil engineering technology to rebuild the urban areas, supplementing their work with magic when necessary or desirable. The task represented an astounding undertaking; its like has never been seen before, and probably will never be seen again.

As the cities slowly reemerged, Surehand revived or created the other necessities of a modern society. Surehand directed the creation of a police force, named the Portland Axis Peace Force. Technicians forged communication links with the rest of the world. Officially, all international communications were channeled through the Salish-Shidhe Council in Bellingham, but Surehand secretly duplicated virtually every facet of the communications net, hardware and software. The duplicate parts of the system stood and operated completely independently of any facility in the north. Though no member of the Salish-Shidhe Council or anyone else in the world even suspected it, by 2034 Surehand and his associates had formed their own nation in all but name.

On May 1, 2035, Lugh Surehand closed the final gap between appearance and reality. At noon, Greenwich Mean Time, the "borders" of Tir Tairngire snapped shut. The city government's communications center somewhere in downtown Portland beamed a powerful narrowcast signal to a number of satellite relays in near-Earth orbit. These relays interpolated Surehand's signal into the sidelinks between the normal network broadcast channels. Attached to the signal itself was a priority code, mimicking the Civil Emergency Network priority code, that guaranteed the satellites would broadcast the signal's message in its entirety, without the slightest chance of interruption. Around the world, Surehand's now-well-known face and voice broke into normal broadcasting on every satellite channel, announcing the formation of a new nation—*Tir Tairngire*, the Land of Promise.

>>>>>[Do you slots have any idea how fragging sophisticated Surehand's "broadcast piracy" was? The Civil Emergency Network priority code is one of the closest-held secrets—for obvious reasons. How did Surehand "acquire" it?

Then take the relays he used to insert his signal into the communications net. He used 24 small comsats, all lifted into space by various corporate lifters, apparently on the orders of several different megacorps. Naturally, the lift providers didn't question the job orders (you don't question MCT's "suggestions," particularly when the suggestion is phrased in nuyen) and sent the birds up on schedule. Only afterward, when people got around to asking questions, did they discover that the corps in question had not commissioned the lifts at all. The orders carried authentic authorization codes, but those codes never saw the head office...if you get my drift. This forced the major megacorps to admit they were suffering from deep infiltration—something that the suits didn't take lightly then, and still don't. Heads rolled, corp security offices began recruiting, career advancement possibilities beckoned like never before...and a drek-load of people "suffered tragic accidents" (read: died under interrogation). Nobody ever figured out just what

happened, and the relays, the best source of clues, self-destructed as soon as Surehand's message ended.

And just where is the Tir's central communications center? Still somewhere in downtown Portland, but no one knows where. Why is it so important to keep it hidden from outsiders? Maybe, in case the elves ever want to use it again.]<<<<<
—Electron Cruiser (17:35:37/2-28-54)

The Salish-Shidhe Council reacted quickly for such a bureaucratic system. The nation fielded few armed forces at the time of the secession, most of them stationed around Seattle for obvious reasons, but it sent what it could spare to Portland. Those units had orders to oust Surehand, peacefully if possible, violently if necessary, and put an end to this secession nonsense immediately. Confident that the "Anglo-goblin rabble" south of the Columbia River wielded nothing more threatening than carving knives and the occasional hunting rifle, the first column of military vehicles passed through the town of Vancouver on the Columbia's north bank and cruised onto the Highway 5 bridge.

The anti-vehicular missiles struck moments later, supported

by assault mortars spitting cluster munitions. This unexpected bombardment decimated the first column, then the second and third. Over the next several days, the Salish-Shidhe probed six more times into Tir Tairngire territory, from several different directions, only to be repulsed and suffer serious losses every time.

>>>>>[We still don't know where or how Tir Tairngire got the weapons, or the personnel capable of using them.]<<<<<
—Dingo (10:04:05/3-14-54)

>>>>>[It's pretty fragging obvious, isn't it? The elves simply used the same connections inside the megacorps that put their communication relays into orbit. All the weapons they used can be found in the armory of any megacorp, and megacorps have never been shy about selling assets to anyone willing to pay the tab.]<<<<<
—Praxis (16:12:18/3-16-54)

>>>>>[It's not quite that simple, Praxis. I agree that the weapons most likely came from megacorp arsenals but the big question is where Lugh Surehand found the money to buy them.

According to my research, he simply didn't have access at the time to the kind of funds needed to acquire the toys he used to defend his borders. So the outright purchase theory stinks

He could have struck a deal with the megacorps: "Give me weapons, and when I've formed my independent state you'll get tax breaks, and so on and so on." If that's the case, then the megacorps got boned—megacorp presence in Tir Tairngire is even lower than in *Serbia*, for frag's sake. More to the point, in the months after Surehand's declaration of independence, the megacorps conducted a major purge over the issue of the comm relays But the inquisition also took in the security forces and arms divisions, which looks like the mega-suits were also trying to figure out where the elves got their armaments. That pretty much eliminates the possibility of a high-level deal, unless someone's conducting a cover-up

What's left? Some kind of fifth column within the megacorps, perhaps, people who support Surehand's goal of an independent "elven homeland." This fifth column wouldn't have to be big; as few as a dozen people in the right places could have pulled it off.]<<<<<
—Leif (03:17:31/3-20-54)

>>>>>[I think Leif's onto something. I did some digging, based on his idea, and came up with a list of fifteen people active in the megacorporate ranks in 2035 who had the clout to arrange the relay satellite lift and make the weapons transfer (If you want to see the list, contact me off-line and I'll transfer it.)

These fifteen people all faded from sight within a couple of years of Tir Tairngire gaining its independence. And few have been seen since.]<<<<<
—May (10:11:41/3-25-54)

>>>>>[Again, what was the incentive? Leif claims that Lugh Surehand didn't have mega nuyen to throw around.]<<<<<
—Wester (23:17:42/3-25-54)

>>>>>[Aye, there's the rub.]<<<<<
—May (09:41:39/3-26-54)

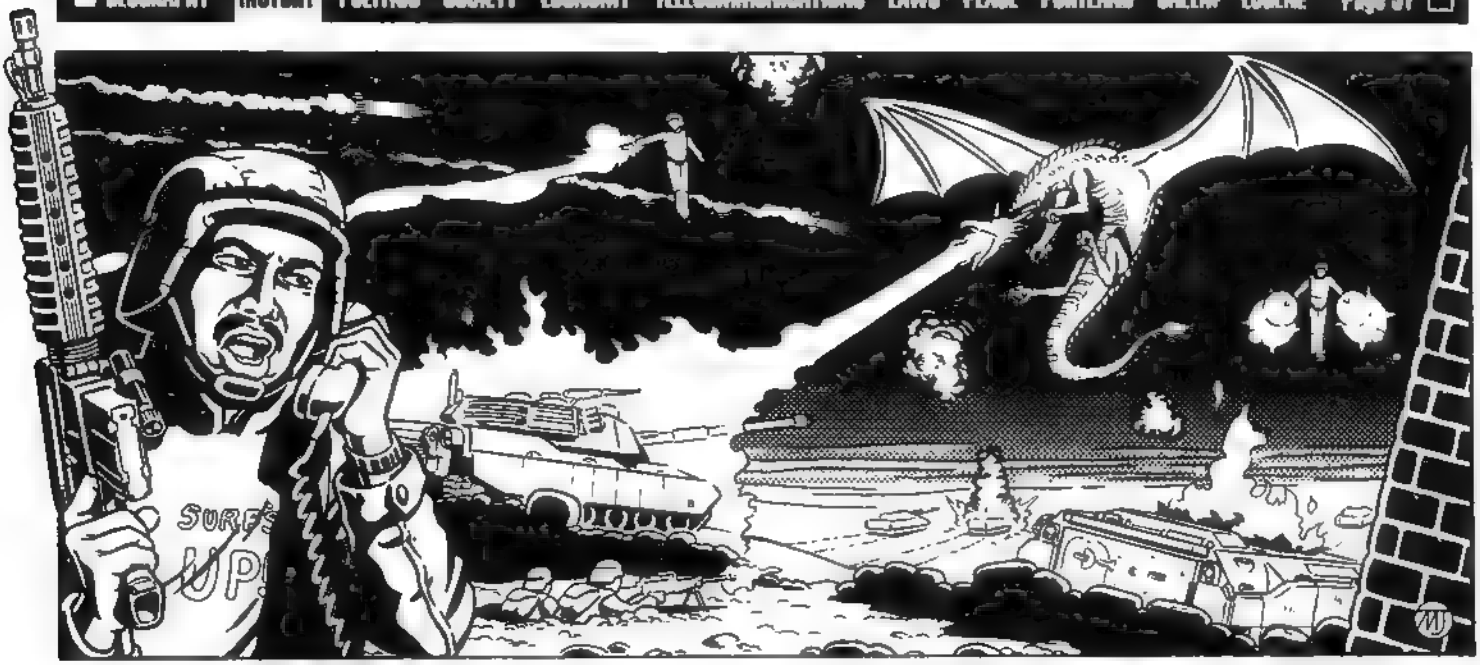
After seeing how easily Tir Tairngire repelled the Salish-Shidhe forces at their own borders, every other Native American Nation quickly recognized Tir Tairngire as a sovereign state

>>>>>[Of course they did. Anything that decreased the stature and influence of the Salish-Shidhe Council in the Sovereign Tribal Council would only *increase* their own influence.]<<<<<
—People Watcher (18.47·55/2-18-54)

CALIFORNIA WAR

The Caribbean League, UCAS, CAS, and Aztlan refused to recognize Tir Tairngire's independence, however. The CAS, already struggling with Texas' bid for independence and Aztlan incursion into CAS territory, vociferously opposed recognizing the elven nation, claiming that doing so would spark "secession fever" across the rest of the continent. Aztlan voiced no opinion on the issue, apparently convinced that any response would serve to dignify the Tir's claim. The state of California, struggling to accomplish its own secession, publicly threw its support firmly behind the fledgling elven state, hoping perhaps that the Tir would in turn support their bid for independence.

Tir Tairngire did react to the chaos in California, but not as Governor Treacle had hoped. In early 2036, the Tir mounted an armed incursion into northern California. The assault force included an entire armored division supported by infantry and limited air cover; Banshee LAVs led the first "assault wave," supported by a handful of EFA variant ground-strike aircraft, followed by lightly armored and armed scout vehicles.



The assault took the California National Guard completely by surprise. The Tir had moved with stealth, successfully preventing even the slightest leak from betraying their plans. The Tir caught the CNG units out of position, completely unprepared to meet a full-scale attack. Within the first six hours of the assault, the Tir forces pushed the California units south of Yreka. By adding paranimals, combat mages, and allegedly at least two dragons to their regular army, the Tir forces rolled south to Redding, where the CNG dug in to make its stand.

The Battle of Redding provides a textbook example of how ineffectual are traditional defensive tactics in the Awakened world. Protected by personal magical shields, Tir mages slammed fireballs and other, more damaging spells into the CNG fortifications with impunity. Records show that at least three CNG commanders succumbed to mental control by elven mages. The men and women in those commands managed to restrain two and kill one of these unwilling renegades, but not before they wreaked havoc among the defenders

The CNG attempted one courageous counterattack, but the Tir forces cut it to ribbons. There were no survivors.

>>>>>[Not true. Some of us got away.

I was with the CNG detachment leading the counterattack. Well, it wasn't actually a counterattack. We were a reserve unit, called up as reinforcements. Our commander, Lt. Col. Van Roggen, recognized while we were still en route that the Redding position was a losing one, even with our units added in. As he saw it, the only chance the California army had of surviving was to break the Tir's momentum. And the only way to do that was to hit them from the flank.

We cut off of I-5 and headed northwest toward the coast, cross-country. Then we swung east again, traveling under total EMCON—no radio transmissions, no radar. We figured we had a chance of engaging the enemy's flank before they even knew we were there.

I was an advance scout, driving a lightly armored ATV. My mission was kind of like the point man for a platoon of ground-pounders—walk into an ambush and get my hoop shot off, so the rest of the platoon can see where the fire's coming from and take out the enemy force. Not the best assignment, but a job's a job.

So we gunned it toward where we thought the major Tir force was set up, hoping that the enemy didn't bother to post outlying scouts or pickets. I was pretty worried about mines. If we hit any, we had FAE bombs to clean them out, but I knew those little sweethearts probably wouldn't help me survive. Only after I went BOOM would my unit know that we were on top of mines.

A dozen klicks out from the main force, I still couldn't see a hint of opposition. No mines, nobody taking potshots at me. Looked like clear sailing. Couple of hundred meters back of me, the main body of the reinforcement force was kicking up dust trying to match my pace.

Then it happened. One moment, I can't see anything more threatening than a couple of lizards. The next time I look around me, the desert is covered by a fragging big defensive force. They'd been sitting there invisible the whole time, or maybe hidden by some kind of magical illusion. They'd let the point man—me—cruise through the ambush, waiting until the main force was in the killing zone to show themselves.

It was an absolute slaughter, chummer. Our forces didn't stand a chance. Missiles, autocannon, artillery, magic...the Tir forces even had a dragon fighting alongside. The elves slagged my entire unit in less than ten minutes.]<<<<<

—Bushwacker (12:11:54/3-1-54)

>>>>>[How'd you make it out, 'wacker?]<<<<<

—Lady J (20:52:18/3-3-54)

>>>>>[By tucking my tail between my legs and running fast as I could. Some paranimals that looked like a cross between a dog and a bear were mopping up the survivors on foot, but I was still riding my ATV. I splattered two of them and managed to hide from everything bigger. Nasty experience, Lady J. Eighteen years later, I still get nightmares.]<<<<<

—Bushwacker (13:19:15/3-4-54)

The Battle of Redding lasted two days, and left the CNG force a shattered remnant of its former strength. The survivors retreated from Redding, leaving the city to the tender mercies of the invading Tir forces.

The Tir generals soon had to admit that they had bitten off more than they could chew. Their forces had conquered territory as far south as Redding, but they could not hold it. Resistance movements immediately sprung up in the newly occupied territory: the most damaging were the partisan-style guerrilla actions whittling away at the Tir's supply lines. For a while it appeared that Surehand and the Tir Council planned to reinforce their troops in an effort to suppress the rebels. Realizing after further consideration, however, that doing so would dangerously deplete defenses along their other borders, the assault forces pulled back to Yreka

The land between Yreka and Redding now serves as a buffer zone between Tir Tairngire and the California Free State. The Tir refrains from making military incursions into the area, and continues a hands-off policy toward Redding. However, the Tir meets any attempts by the CNG, now the California State Guard, after the state's secession, to advance beyond Redding with a show of overwhelming force. Nonmilitary traffic from CalFree into the buffer zone continues unmolested.

>>>>>[Officially, like I said elsewhere, the Tir claims land as far south as Redding, while CalFree claims its borders end at Yreka. Political fun and games.]<<<<<

—Bung (19:18.11/3-27-54)

After the Tir so brilliantly proved that it could defend and even expand its borders, thereby supporting its claim of independence, the other nations of North America recognized the elven nation's sovereignty, with the single exception of Aztlan. Though Aztlan never recognized Tir Tairngire even to the extent of rejecting its claim, historical evidence suggests that the Central American nation immediately mounted a covert effort aimed at undermining the Tir's new government by attempting to infiltrate *agents provocateurs* to foment rebellion within the fledgling nation. Surehand and his new government never revealed to the world Aztlan's attempts at destabilization, and Aztlan eventually abandoned their efforts. The government of Aztlan still refuses to officially recognize Tir Tairngire as a sovereign nation, commonly referring to it as "the elven settlements" when forced to acknowledge its existence

>>>>>[Several top secret internal and diplomatic papers "leaked" from Aztlan indicate that the government there views Tir Tairngire (and Tir Nan Og) as an "unfriendly power." Both nations received this status almost immediately upon their founding. Other nations with this distinction include Amazonia. The connection? All are Awakened nations ruled by metahumans or led by strong metahuman power blocs While Aztlan's internal policies toward metahumans are not the most progressive, they certainly treat them no worse than other nations. Why do they insist on making an apparently meaningless distinction? No one who knows is saying.]<<<<<

—World View (18 09:48/3-15-54)

FLEDGLING NATION

When he declared the independence of Tir Tairngire, Lugh Surehand also announced his position in the new government, calling himself High Prince. The elves in power established themselves as the ruling body of the new land, the Council of Princes, among whom Aithne Oakforest, Sean Laverty, and Jenna Ni'Fairra, a relative unknown, were the most influential. Though these Princes received public recognition, members of certain circles know that Ehran the Scribe was and remains an official but secret member of the Council. These five hold the real power in the Tir. A later section reveals more of these elves and the Council's structure.

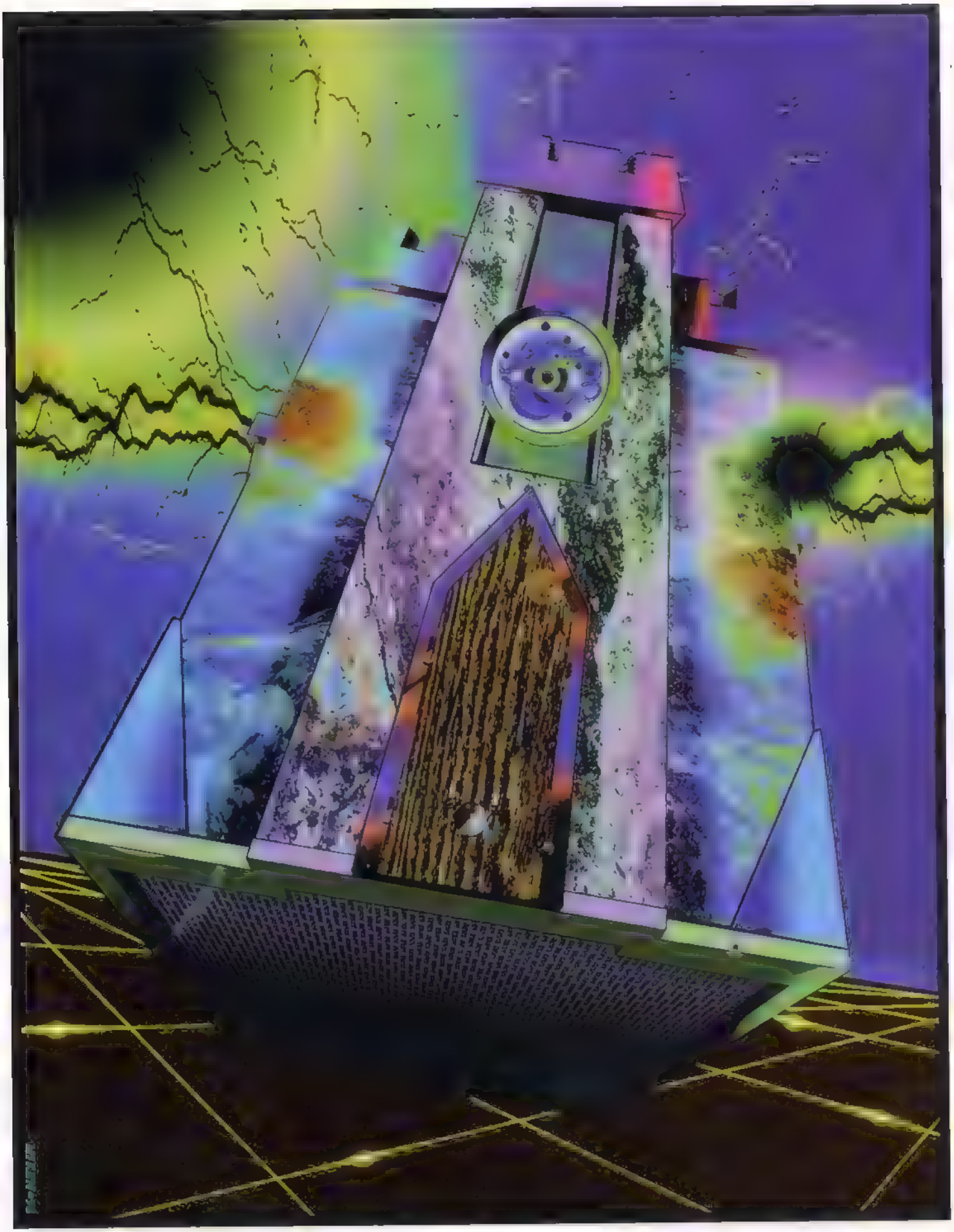
In one of its first actions, the government temporarily established the nation's capital in Salem, the capital of the old state of Oregon. Though Portland's function as the primary center of trade for the Tir made it the nation's most important city, the Council wisely decided that its close proximity to the Salish-Shidhe border made it a less appropriate and certainly more vulnerable seat of government.

In 2036, the Council acknowledged that Portland had become the hub of trade between Tir Tairngire and the rest of the world. Construction began on the Portland Wall that same year and was completed in 2037, creating a physical barrier between the international tradesmen and the rest of the country. Portland welcomed out-of-country merchants and traders, within tight restrictions, but the land beyond the city remained strictly off-limits. From the outset, the Tir enjoyed healthy trade with its neighbors, and with countries throughout the world. During the first half-decade of its independence, the Tir prospered by exporting natural resources and raw materials. The Tir also felt secure enough within this time to move the nation's capital to the Portland area, establishing Royal Hill several kilometers to the west of the walled city.

Slowly but surely, the nature of trade changed As the Tir built up its secondary (manufacturing) and tertiary (information-based) industries, it reduced its exports of raw materials, instead exporting technology and advanced manufactured products. Trade in artwork also blossomed. During the 2040s, Portland's economy boomed as billions of nuyen worth of imports and exports passed through the city. A large trade infrastructure grew within the city, and many ambitious men and women made personal fortunes.

This system worked for fifteen years. In 2052, the Council of Princes decided that the time had come for a change. More and more of the nation's tax revenue was diverted to supporting the Portland infrastructure—its docks, warehouses, and shipping facilities. The Council finally questioned why the Tir should support its own such facilities, when a larger port with better-developed access to land, sea, and air trade lay less than 500 kilometers to the north. With this question in mind, the Tir entered into negotiations with the government of Seattle.

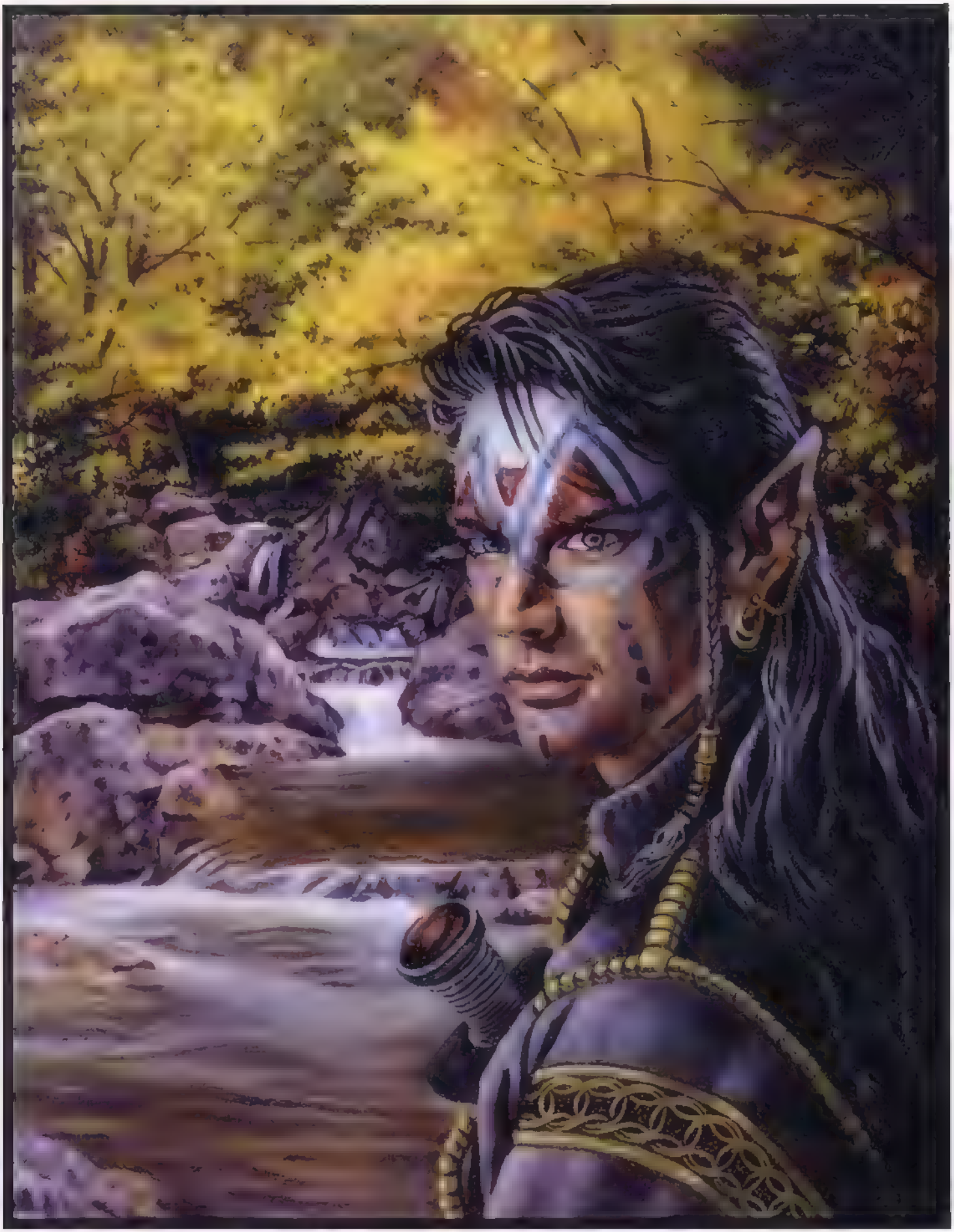
The details of these negotiations remain as secret today as on the day they were signed. Whatever the final terms, Tir Tairngire quickly shifted a large percentage of its international trade from Portland to the port of Seattle.



The Tir Matrix, a blend of high-tech and ancient design • By Mike Nielsen

The High Prince, Lugh Surehand, appears with his guard on Secession Day, February 23 • By Joel Biske

Lofwyr the Great Dragon casts his fathomless gaze over Portland • By James Nelson

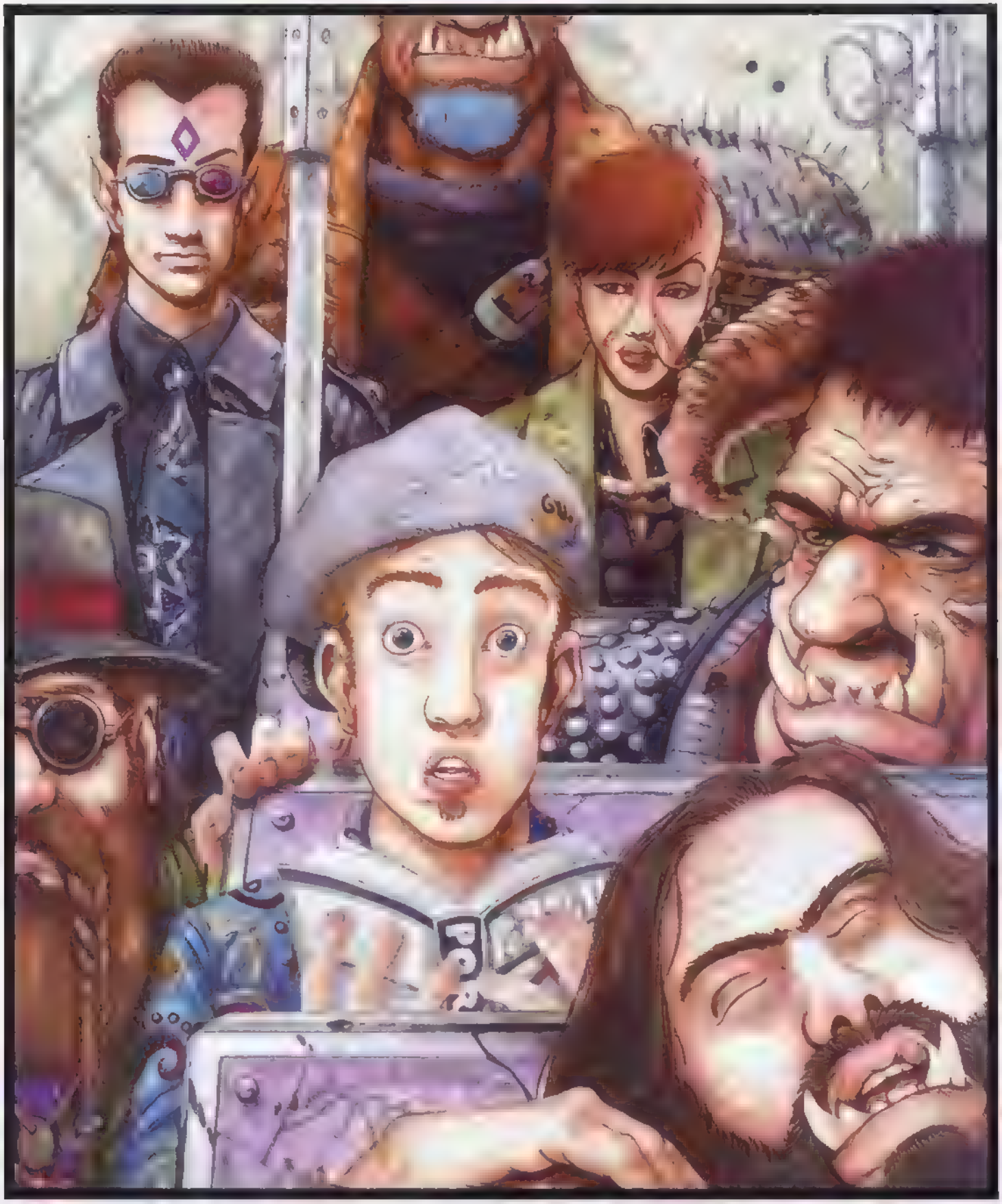


The Tir Rite of Passage brings an elf into manhood, and responsibility • By Tony Szczudlo

Along the border, a Tir patrol prepares for a night of fireworks • By Janet Aulisio

Ehran the Scribe, writer and social theorist, exerts a mysterious influence over Tir Taimgire • By Joel Biske

Competition of spirit and form: Tir elves undergo the Rite of Progression • By Janet Aulisio



Travel Tip #38: When in Portland— *Take a cab!* • By Jeff Laubenstein

>>>>>[The "terms of the negotiations" were nothing more than a large "stipend" paid by the Tir into the personal bank account of Governor Schultz]<<<<<
—Teddy (12:45:35/3-12-54)

>>>>>[Bulldrek.]<<<<<
—Lax (06:51:02/3-24-54)

The Tir now ships all export or import goods by land and sea between Portland and Seattle. International carriers fly trade goods for the Tir into or out of SeaTac airport, or ship them through the Seattle docks. Portland retains its function as the sole "port of entry" for trade goods, but has far less importance for the nation than before. Very little actual trading still takes place within the city. From its position as the mercantile center of the elven nation, Portland has been "demoted" to serve as nothing more than a cargo way station.

>>>>>[Much to the distress and disgust of many local businesses. Scan the later sections.]<<<<<
—Confidante (16:49:59/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Portland used to be a boom town. Now it's gone bust. Fortunes made during the 2040s drained away, a staggering number ending in bankruptcy. Something much stronger than dissatisfaction permeates Portland.

Why did the Council of Princes make a decision that would trash one of the Tir's major cities? Nobody knows. No doubt they had their reasons, but then, the man on the street's never had much success trying to read the Princes' minds and gauge their motivations.]<<<<<
—The Chromed Bookkeeper (21:54.53/3-12-54)

>>>>>[Scope this theory. Maybe the Council didn't like what was happening to Portland. Throughout the first few years of the Tir's existence, the Council said a lot about the "capitalist corruption" endemic to Seattle and other large cities, particularly those in the UCAS, CAS and CalFree. When they turned Portland into a trading bordertown, essentially creating a free port, especially when compared to the restrictions on the rest of the Tir, they invited that capitalist corruption into their own nation. They did it out of necessity, and the upside generally outweighed the downside, but as soon as they had a chance to change it, they did.

The government simply took the opportunity to remind everyone, including the owners of thriving businesses, that Portland was still a part of the Tir Tairngire nation and subject to its laws and philosophies. By moving most trade to Seattle, they eliminated the "ideological rot" riddling Portland—not by stamping it out or legislating it out of existence, but simply by asphyxiating it.]<<<<<
—People Watcher (15:29.41/3-18-54)

>>>>>[Only a fraggin' brainwipe could support that kind of heavy-handed government interference.]<<<<<
—Szaz (00:45:31/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Look, slot, I'm not saying that's the way things ought to be; I'm just trying to understand and explain it, okay?]<<<<<
—People Watcher (16:00:32/3-20-54)

Today, Tir Tairngire maintains formal, standard diplomatic relations with all North American nations except for Aztlan, and with Japan. The nation is also working to build ties with other influential countries around the world, including the United Kingdom.

In less than 20 years, Tir Tairngire developed from a fledgling state to an important and influential player on the world scene. The nation's influence can only increase in the foreseeable future.

>>>>>[Did you hear the one about the old dwarf who was dying? An angel comes down to him, he was a real righteous bleeder during his life, and says to him, "Old dwarf, before I cart you off to the Great Hereafter, I'm entitled to give you one last wish as a reward for your righteous deeds. What is it that you want?"

And the old dwarf, he thinks about it for a bit. Then, in his cracked and hoarse old voice, he says, "Angel, my dying wish is for California Free State to try to invade Seattle by land, but be turned back. And then I want them to try the invasion again, but again be turned back. And then I want them to try a third time, and again be turned back."

And the angel was sore confused, like, and asked, "But, old dwarf, *why*? You've got nothing against Seattle. Why three attempted invasions?"

And the old dwarf says, "Because that means the CalFree army will go through Tir Tairngire six times."]<<<<<
—Blackie (15:06 08/2-14-54)

POLITICS

To outsiders, the Tir's national government looks like a confusing cross between hereditary monarchy and feudalism, with fragments of the democratic process thrown in as leavening (or a socio-political pacifier). Outsiders encountering the Tir government come away with an overall impression of something exotic, charged with mystery and surrounded by an aura of glamor.

This is, of course, exactly the result that the founders of Tir Tairngire set out to achieve. Their new nation gave them a blank slate upon which to write; no traditions dictated their choices. They were free to create a new political structure, unencumbered by carry-overs from the past Had they wished, they could have constructed the first truly rational government, based on a contemporary understanding of social dynamics, international relations, and the science of government.

Instead, they adopted a system founded on concepts considered obsolete for generations: hereditary rulership, a distinct aristocracy, and strict class stratification.

>>>>>[Sounds like Britain.]<<<<<
—Benny (23:15:04/3-1-54)

>>>>>[Yep. Like the man said, "obsolete." *Neh*?]<<<<<
—Hayes (02:01:24/3-10-54)

They also named the branches and agents of the government to achieve the highest emotional resonance, using titles such as "High Prince," "Council of Princes," "Star Chamber," "Paladins," and so on. Lugh Surehand, Ehran, Laverty, Oakforest, and the rest must have made deliberate choices to invest their new government with a kind of borrowed respectability. Even though the government of Tir Tairngire is less than 20 years old it *feels* much older, and thus more stable and deserving of respect.

>>>>>[The logic and psychology here are unassailable. Call your top dog the "Maximum Leader" or something equally drekky, and everybody's going to write you off as another banana republic. But call the head honcho "High Prince" and everyone goes "ooh" and "ah."]<<<<<
—Dalton (23:03:49/2-18-54)

>>>>>[Are you comparing Tir Tairngire to a banana republic?]<<<<<
—Zip (08:07:13/2-19-54)

>>>>>[What do *you* think, *omae*?]<<<<<
—Dalton (01:34:03/2-20-54)

The governmental structure retains the same basic shape given to it at the founding of Tir Tairngire. The addition of the Star Chamber marks the only significant change (for details, see the **Star Chamber** section later in this file). From the first day of the Tir's independent existence, the Council of Princes served as its ruling body, and the High Prince performed the duties of head of state.

>>>>>[That's not to say that the Council itself remains the same, of course. The Tir Council of Princes consisted of only four members at its founding: Aithne Oakforest, Sean Laverty, and Jenna Ni'Fairra (okay, plus Ehran's quiet participation) with Lugh Surehand sitting as High Prince. Additional members joined the Council over the years, bringing it up to its current roll of eleven. At the same time, Surehand and his chummers declared themselves "instant aristocrats," then granted their bloodlines that status in perpetuity. Historical precedents exist for this type of highhandedness, of course—just look at the bloodletting and throne-hopping that took place in medieval Europe—but this behavior is far rarer in these so-called "enlightened" times.]<<<<<

—Wagner (06:41:09/3-20-54)

>>>>>[The First Five are scions of the elven bloodlines through their heritage and birth. When they named themselves Princes, they merely acknowledged that heritage and birthright. Their acceptance of the right to authority was simply a recognition of the truth.]<<<<<

—Ariadne (16:13:27/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Where's this slitch get off with her highfalutin' talk?]<<<<<

—Bomber Murphy (06:23:17/3-24-54)

>>>>>[What kind of "heritage and birthright" are we talking here, for frag's sake? The first elf didn't pop up until 2011. "Scions" of a "bloodline" that's all of 42 years old? I get the feeling one of us is from a different planet, and I don't think it's me, Ariadne old chummer.]<<<<<

—Blake (07:07:19/3-24-54)

>>>>>[You've hit on one of the big undercurrents running through the interactions between the High Prince and the Council: age. Their rituals, social structures, and interpersonal relations reek of tradition. Their style of dress, manners, and forms of greeting are very formalized, especially among themselves. On a number of occasions, particularly during heated discussions, I have heard members of the Council of Princes speak to each other *in a language I didn't understand.* I speak Sperethiel, have since it was introduced, and while I could pick out a few words that sounded like Sperethiel in their exchange, it definitely was not the Elvish I understand.]<<<<<

—Aegis (20:51:10/3-21-54)

>>>>>[*¿N'e'quea che tsemena mettakas q'en demell?*]<<<<<

—The Laughing Man (09:16:40/3-22-54)

>>>>>[Your accent is showing.]<<<<<

—The Big "D" (03:52:51/3-23-54)

COUNCIL OF PRINCES

The highest governing body, or chamber, of the Tir Tairngire national government is the Council of Princes. Since mid-2036, eleven Princes comprise the Council. (Traditionally, the Council does not include the High Prince among their number though he sits on it and is selected from it by its membership.) Though Tir Tairngire publishes its council as made up of eleven members, I personally have reason to believe it numbers thirteen, Ehran being the twelfth member and another elf—a woman—the secret thirteenth. However, I know nothing about this mystery woman, and can find out nothing concerning her.

>>>>>[I too know nothing of her, though I am one of the select (lucky) few to have met her. I was attending a series of meetings at Royal Hill one afternoon last year and met Lugh Surehand and a woman in one of the private corridors. A polite nod or no acknowledgment at all would have been equally correct for the High Prince meeting one of my rank, but for some reason he hesitated and thus made a formal introduction necessary. He greeted me, I returned the greeting, and then he turned slightly and introduced the woman at his side as Sósan Naerain (I found the correct spelling of her name on a document I saw later). I hope my wife never sees this confession, but she was, and remains, the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. She stood below average height, but was not tiny, with fine, delicate features and bright, shining blue-green eyes. Her hair is a scintillating golden red, full and luxuriant. A sense of strength and power in her manner and eyes belied her small stature

She nodded at me as the High Prince gave her my name, and then complimented me in a quiet, throaty voice on a particular work of mine. I was astounded, and speechless, and as soon as that became apparent the High Prince nodded again and led her away.]<<<<<

—Aegis (02:46:50/3-17-54)

The original three members of the Council were Althne Oakforest, Sean Laverty, and Jenna Ni'Fairra, with Ehran as a private fourth. According to official records, the Council elected Lugh Surehand as High Prince "by acclamation." By August of 2035, three more Princes sat on the Council: Jonathon Reed, Maria Cinebal, and Dar Varien. The three elven newcomers enjoyed high status in the Tir community, and unlike the original Princes, anyone interested could trace the history of each to before the founding of Tir Tairngire. Both Reed and Varien were born in Europe during the first spate of UGE, and moved to the Tir as adults. The background of Maria Cinebal proved harder to trace, but public records now accept her as a spike baby.

>>>>>[Okay, enlighten us dullards. What's a spike baby?]<<<<<

—Roz (15:13.22/2-16-54)

>>>>>[It's a recently coined term referring to a person—or animal—that expresses the phenotype of mana-initiated loci before the level of magic reaches the threshold normally required for expression. The whole concept of the "spike baby" is only now being accepted into mainstream scientific thought.]<<<<<

—Genebender (13:07:26/2-17-54)

>>>>>[..???

I'll repeat the question. What's a spike baby? (In English, this time)]<<<<<

—Roz (12:15:08/2-18-54)

>>>>>[A current theory for explaining UGE, or Awakening, is that particular stretches of DNA, the "loci," on various chromosomes

don't "turn on," or "express," until the level of magic in the world reaches a certain height. When the magic level hits this threshold, the genes in these areas turn on and produce specific enzymes, which in turn cause changes in the body. These changes include pointy ears, dermal deposition, or any other metahuman characteristic you'd care to name

For reasons we have yet to understand, in some people these areas of the DNA turn on before they should, expressing before the magic level rises to the right threshold. Certain animals, for example, the century ferret, (*Mustela millenniae*), Awakened early (before the majority of animals Awakened) because of this phenomenon. Its occurrence is rare in humans, but it does happen. Records show some "spike babies"—almost exclusively elves—who Awakened several years before the general Awakening began, and so it's possible that spike babies were being born decades or even centuries before the Awakening. These babies were probably dismissed as having birth defects, and so not recorded as anything unusual.]<<<<<

—Doc (17:21:40/2-21-54)

>>>>>[So there could have been elves born before the Awakening? Interesting. This all seems to be tied into an ambient mana/magic level, right? And we know that varies from location to location (ley lines, loci, background count, and so on). Could some locations have produced more "spike babies" than other places?]<<<<<

—Deep Thought (09:21:20/3-1-54)

>>>>>[It seems reasonable, though I've never given it any thought.]<<<<<

—Doc (18:02:12/3-3-54)

Though Jenna Ni'Fairra and Maria Cinebal provided a female presence on the Council, joined by several later additions, the Council members decided early on that females would also receive the title "Prince," rather than "Princess."

>>>>>[A decision made by males, no doubt.]<<<<<

—Lysistrata (16:02:52/2-25-54)

>>>>>[Actually, Maria Cinebal proposed the designation. She considered the negative, "weak" connotations traditionally associated with "Princess" distasteful.]<<<<<

—Zarathustra (03:36:09/2-27-54)

ENTER THE DRAGON

The next addition to the Council surprised most subjects of Tir Tairngire and all foreign observers. The Council of Princes named Lofwyr, the great dragon, as one of its number, granting it all the responsibilities and authority associated with the title. Even inside the Tir, little is known of the reasons for elevating Lofwyr to the lofty position of Prince, but this move created public conflict in the Council. High Prince Surehand apparently decreed that Lofwyr should become a Prince, shocking most of the Council. According to painstaking reconstructions of fragmented records, Jenna Ni'Fairra and Aithne Oakforest both adamantly opposed Lofwyr's elevation, as did Ehran the Scribe. Sean Laverty disapproved, but did

little more than voice his opposition. The new Princes, Reed, Cinebal, and Varien, supported the High Prince in this matter. As it seems unlikely that these three knew Surehand's motivation for naming Lofwyr a Prince, their support was probably payment of some kind of political debt.

Oakforest demanded that the Council vote to veto the High Prince's decree. It is hard to say what he expected to gain by the vote. Three of the six Princes openly backed Surehand, and, at the time, a simple majority vote could veto the High Prince (now a *two-thirds* majority). A tie—three for and three against—would give Surehand himself the deciding vote. Perhaps Oakforest was hoping that, when push came to shove, the new Princes would abandon whatever debt they felt they owed to Surehand and avoid the lesser evil by enforcing the veto

Whatever Oakforest's motivations, the result of the vote must have been an unpleasant surprise. In an open ballot, only he, Ehran, and Jenna Ni'Fairra opposed Lofwyr's elevation to Prince. Sean Laverty voted with the new Princes *against* the veto. When Ehran threatened to resign from the Council in protest, Surehand called the Scribe's bluff. Lofwyr became a Prince, and Ehran remained on the Council.

>>>>>[Probably because he knew Lugh Surehand had a replacement waiting in the wings—one Reiner Graff, a European elf and an outspoken supporter of the High Prince.]<<<<<
—Artemetra (10:19:00/2-20-54)

>>>>>[I can't believe I've never heard a whisper of this in all my studies. The Tir expertly presents a calm, unified exterior to the rest of the world, never hinting at the convulsions taking place under the surface.]<<<<<
—People Watcher (19:05:50/2-23-54)

>>>>>[What's this biz about Lofwyr and the elves? I thought elves didn't like dragons, and vice versa?]<<<<<
—Gorgon (07:08 08/2-26-54)

>>>>>[Beware generalizations, Gorgon. Do humans hate dwarves? No. *Some* humans may hate *some* dwarves, and vice versa. So it is with elves and dragons. Obviously, Lugh Surehand is one of those enlightened souls not poisoned by xenophobia and unreasoning hatred.]<<<<<
—Wu (15:53:01/2-27-54)

>>>>>[Oh, thank you. It's been quite some time since I've fallen off my seat from laughing.]<<<<<
—The Laughing Man (09:20:01/3-11-54)

>>>>>[Sigh.]<<<<<
—The Big "D" (19:50:51/3-15-54)

>>>>>[Maybe he just saw some big benefit in cozying up with a great dragon.]<<<<<
—Reality Czech (21:41:27/3-17-54)

>>>>>[Surehand wanted a dragon on the Council. Oakforest and Ehran didn't. Surehand, as High Prince, railroads it through, and Oakforest can do frag-all about it. Sounds like the start of a major rivalry. Or maybe just the latest skirmish in a long, drawn-out campaign...]<<<<<
—Norman (06:21:19/3-18-54)

>>>>>[Or maybe the whole thing was orchestrated—agreed to beforehand and scripted.]<<<<<
—Lilo (23:10:18/3-18-54)

>>>>>[For whose benefit, for frag's sake? Who's the audience, and who gains?]<<<<<
—Barc (18:26:10/3-19-54)

>>>>>[I don't know if those are relevant questions in the Tir, Barc old chummer. I sometimes get the feeling that these guys practice intrigue just for the hell of it. It's like a hobby, or a long-ingrained habit, or a form of exercise. They do it without thinking, that's my reading.]<<<<<
—Lilo (23 09 27/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Perceptive, my lady.]<<<<<
—Spes (18:24:53/3-21-54)

The final four additions to the Council appear to be a result of public pressure. Though the vast majority of onlookers think of Tir Tairngire as an "elven" nation, it is home to other Awakened species as well. Representatives of the other major populations, mainly dwarves and orks, began to petition the government for a voice in national affairs. Many elves, acutely aware of the pain of disenfranchisement, having experienced it themselves in other lands, supported these demands. Surehand and the Council conceded the point fairly quickly. In mid-2036, the Council named the last four Princes of Tir Tairngire: Blake Ladner and Garth Stone, both dwarves; Larry Zincan, an ork; and "Rex," a sasquatch. (Sasquatches view the concept of naming differently than humans. "Rex" is the "verbal tag" that the sasquatch Prince has accepted as referring to himself.)

These four new Princes officially possess all the same rights, responsibilities, and powers as the elven and dragon Princes. They exercise almost none of them, however, are rarely heard in debate, and generally keep a low profile.

>>>>>[Seat-warmers brought in by Surehand, guaranteed to back his every move?]<<<<<
—Luke (18:04.29/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Could be.]<<<<<
—Reality Czech (16:22:39/3-14-54)

The Princes are, by virtue of their position, of "Royal" social rank; any offspring they produce automatically hold that rank, in perpetuity. This system makes the term "Prince" somewhat confusing. For example, Aithne Oakforest is a Prince because he sits on the Council of Princes; he is also a Prince because he is a member of the Royal social rank. This makes his son, Glasgian Oakforest, also a Prince, because he is a hereditary member of the Royal social rank; however, his title does not denote membership of the Council of Princes. This lack of distinction between Council members and other Royals rarely causes problems in the Tir. At last count, the Royal social rank contained only several hundred members, and all of them know each other. Within this relatively small group, there exists no danger of confusion between Council Princes and social-rank Princes. Anyone of a lower social caste must follow such strict rules of protocol when addressing a person of Royal rank that the origin of that rank hardly matters

>>>>>[Got it? Glasgian Oakforest is a Prince and the son of a Prince, but he's not on the Council of Princes...yet.]<<<<<
—People Watcher (18:18:46/3-2-54)

When a Council seat becomes vacant, through retirement, incapacity, or death, the Council members may each nominate one candidate for that seat from the Royal social rank. The Council as a whole then democratically selects the replacement from those candidates. Though the High Prince *cannot* nominate a candidate, his vote to fill the vacant seat counts as *five*

>>>>>[So the High Prince can't nominate his own choice. Well, any politician worthy of the name can sleaze that little restriction. And since the High Prince's vote counts as five, it wouldn't take much in

the way of maneuvering and bribery to guarantee his fair-haired boy the chair.]<<<<<
—Auntie Social (03 24:50/3-3-54)

>>>>>[Hey, what about this pointy-ear they call Urdli? His name carries heavy karma on the streets, supposed to be some serious player, but nobody knows squat about him.]<<<<<
—Praxis (17:42:50/3-6-54)

>>>>>[First off, he's an Australasian—aborigine, "blackfella," "boong," whatever you want to call him (but not to his face). He showed up in the Tir a couple of years back, and stuck around. He's not a Prince. Anything I can find out says he got into the country from the High Prince fiat or by some scammy way, so he's not strictly a subject—more like a resident. He can't advance socially because he hasn't gone through the Rite of Progression, and I don't think even Surehand could get away with bumping him up in social rank (the Council of Princes would almost certainly try a veto, and they might make it). So what is he doing in the Tir? I don't know. He and his close friend Glasgian Oakforest seem to be cooking something up, but no one knows what.]<<<<<
—Tangent (23:28:52/3-6-54)

>>>>>[I wouldn't call Urdli and Glasgian friends. Glasgian thinks Urdli's a pedantic fossil, and what Urdli thinks of Glasgian can't be printed. But you're right, Tangent, they *are* cooking up something together. Urdli, Ehran, and Sean Laverty also have some kind of unusual dynamic going on, but I can't read what it is.]<<<<<
—Aegis (21:18.29/3-8-54)

HIGH PRINCE

The Council of Princes selects the High Prince from among their number, and every Prince on the Council is eligible. Because the voting takes place in secret, the exact process—secret or open ballot, the number of times ballots are cast, and so on—remains unknown. Public records show that the vote must be unanimous; even a single dissenting vote forces the issue back to ballot. Obviously, this means that every Prince who believes he stands a chance of being selected for the top spot must do some intense lobbying, persuading, intimidating, and perhaps even bribing to guarantee a unanimous vote

>>>>>[That's a fragging stupid way of doing things. Go figure: the minute some fair-haired boy expresses a strong opinion, it's a dead cert that at least *one* slot will disagree...and there's your one dissenting vote. Which leaves the middle-of-the-road compromise candidate—someone who's milquetoast enough for everyone to live with. And then the person selected has to walk a very narrow tightrope to make sure he or she keeps the support of the swing votes. Isn't that right?]<<<<<
—Shaky (12:44:54/2-27-54)

>>>>>[Sounds like electing a pope.]<<<<<
—Luce (17 16:53/3-1-54)

Once elected, a High Prince holds that position for life. He can voluntarily step down at any time, but by doing so also surrenders his right to sit on the Council. A High Prince who steps down retains his Royal social rank. As discussed below, the Council may remove a High Prince from office by "impeaching" him through a vote of no-confidence. Lugh Surehand, the first High Prince, still holds his position, having weathered at least one vote of no-confidence.

The High Prince serves as the head of state of Tir Tairngire, head of both executive and legislative branches, and the commander in chief of the Peace Force in both its military and police functions.

THE HIGH PRINCE AND THE COUNCIL

Despite popular belief, the High Prince does not have the power of an absolute ruler. His word is not necessarily law. He can issue orders to any department of the government, create or eliminate laws, alter the privileges granted to Tir subjects, declare war, and rule on virtually anything else. However, the Council of Princes has the power to oppose him.

The Council may issue a veto to invalidate any single decree handed down by the High Prince. This veto power requires the Council to reach a two-thirds majority vote (formerly a straight majority). A veto cannot be established by a quorum vote: the entire Council must be present at the vote. Even one Council Prince's request for a veto vote puts the High Prince's decree on hold until the entire Council can gather for the vote. This prevents the High Prince from "railroading" a decree through by proposing it when he knows members of the Council cannot be present for the vote.

>>>>>[It also allows just one or two Princes to put a decree on hold indefinitely, doesn't it? Princes A and B don't like the decree, but doubt they can get the two-thirds majority for a veto. So Prince A goes on an "extended junket," while Prince B calls for the vote. This puts the decree on hold until Prince A deigns to return from wherever. Leads to all kinds of Machiavellian maneuvering, and lets a minority of Princes hold the Council hostage.]<<<<<
—Lincoln (23:58:12/2-25-54)

>>>>>[True, but a decree can only be "held" for a maximum of 72 hours—long enough for absent Princes to return and make their opinions known. If a Prince fails to respond to a call for veto within 72 hours, his vote is registered as opposed to the veto. The Council assumes that if a Prince really cares about pushing the veto through, he or she will make the effort to show up.]<<<<<
—Spes (13:00:55/2-26-54)

>>>>>[That sounds okay for most situations. But for some issues—like maybe military response to provocation—72 hours is too long to wait. What then?]<<<<<
—Lincoln (00:01:15/2-28-54)

>>>>>[Then the High Prince may declare his decree to be a "matter of national emergency." The Council cannot call for a veto vote on national-emergency decrees, but must hold an automatic vote of no-confidence at the first mutually convenient time after the decree is

announced. A High Prince is unlikely to risk a no-confidence vote by using the national emergency decree to force through an unpopular policy...unless he considers the decree more important than his continued tenure in office. Evidently, Surehand has managed to accomplish his agenda so far without resorting to this extreme measure.]<<<<<

—Spes (14:40:30/2-28-54)

The Council has the power to remove the High Prince through a vote of no-confidence. This vote also requires a three-quarters majority, and all Princes on the Council must vote. Only 72 hours may pass between the calling of a vote of no-confidence and the actual vote. The vote of any Prince who fails to appear is registered in favor of the resolution to remove the High Prince, based on the assumption that someone strongly opposed to the resolution would have made the effort to be present for the vote. Under normal circumstances, a vote of no-confidence can be held only once per year. On May 1, the anniversary of Tir Tairngire's founding, any Prince on the Council may call a vote to remove the High Prince from office

The Council must call a vote of no-confidence any time the Council successfully vetoes a decree by the High Prince, if the High Prince forces a decree through as a national emergency, or if the High Prince vetoes a decree put forward by the Council (see below).

Further, any member of the Council can call for a vote of no-confidence at any time other than those stipulated above, *but the High Prince must agree to holding the vote.*

>>>>>[What? That makes no fragging sense!]<<<<<

—Lincoln (00:21:53.2-26-54)

>>>>>[Agreed. This stipulation creates an illusion of freedom to oust the High Prince that simply does not exist.

If a Prince requests a special vote of no-confidence, the High Prince will not grant the vote unless he knows that the resolution will fail. Thus, no Council member ever asks for a vote unless he knows something that the High Prince doesn't.

Of course, if the Council member requests a special vote, the High Prince immediately knows that something unusual is going on, and simply refuses to allow the vote. No one has ever used this provision...for obvious reasons.]<<<<<

—Spes (13:15:42/2-26-54)

The Princes of the Council possess legislative and executive powers, in addition to their power of veto. They can also declare decrees, on the same issues as the High Prince. Decrees proposed by the Council must be ratified by a two-thirds majority; absent Princes have 72 hours from the time the decree is proposed to arrive for the vote. The vote of any Prince who fails to show up is registered in favor of the decree. The High Prince can veto any decree ratified by the Council, but by doing so automatically triggers a vote of no-confidence

Votes of no-confidence may also be used to remove Princes from the Council. Any Prince, including the High Prince, can call such a vote at any time. A simple majority carries the vote; in this case, the High Prince may also vote, and his vote counts as five. The Prince on whom the vote is called does not vote, and so the High Prince and five other Princes can remove another Prince from the Council.

>>>>>[Oh, God—Machiavellian and baroque *cubed*!]<<<<<

—Lycra Goddess (13:24:38/3-1-54)

PALADINS

Within Tir Tairngire, the term paladin currently holds three meanings. The first and most common is the social rank, which has become synonymous with "patron." One can become a Paladin of a specific cause, or cultural or charitable organization. No prerequisites define who becomes a Paladin of this sort; one simply declares one's intentions to do so From that moment on, that person must devote all the energy and resources at his or her disposal to further that cause. Assuming a Paladinship for a cause becomes a matter of honor, a responsibility not taken lightly. For reasons of resources, influence, and time, only individuals of Noble rank or greater usually assume a Paladinship.

The second meaning of paladin springs from a less formal usage, apparently instituted by Ehran the Scribe and then taken up by others. Many members of the Royal rank support followings of individuals who have pledged their service to that Royal personage, becoming paladins of that member of Royalty. This pledge carries serious obligations; the person making the commitment shoulders responsibilities similar to those associated with an oath of fealty. From the moment of investiture, the paladin's life is sworn to his or her lord, and only the lord can break that bond. Most of these paladins are the young offspring of various families of Royal rank, generally the second and subsequent sons and daughters. These individuals hold high social rank because of their family, but recognize their slim chances of ever sitting on the

Council of Princes. In creating the role of paladin, Ehran recognized their dissatisfaction and restlessness and gave them a useful outlet. These paladins serve as aides, run errands—both within the Tir and outside its borders—and perform other, usually minor, tasks at the bidding of their lords. With the encouragement of Ehran the Scribe, they also engage in the activity known as the Hunt.

Several years ago, Ehran conceived the idea of the Hunt. Traditionally, the division of the Peace Force assigned to border duty may accept volunteer assistance from any Tir subject of Comital social rank or higher. The original intent of this arrangement was to give the "scions" of Tir Tairngire the opportunity to personally verify that the borders of their land had sufficient protection from "foreign contagion." In creating the Hunt, Ehran turned this privilege to his own purposes.

At some point, he planted the idea in the minds of his paladins that riding the border from time to time and hunting "invaders" made good sport. The idea immediately caught their imaginations, and younger sons and daughters of Royal-rank families patrolling the borders alongside Peace Force troops soon became a common sight. Though Tir Tairngire fiercely defends the integrity of its borders, it dislikes the idea of having to dispose of the body of every interloper. The border patrol usually induces chemical amnesia in its captives and then releases them: the noble paladins prefer to kill intruders on sight.

>>>>>[So Ehran's got a group of bloodthirsty young nobles loyal to him? Interesting, but is it important?]<<<<<
—Jacques (10 58 26/2-27-54)

>>>>>[It's certainly nothing new. Back in the Middle Ages in Europe, the junior sons of noble families had it real rough; no prospects, no duties, and no responsibilities. To avoid boredom, they raised hell—sometimes even indulging in banditry (that's a ganger type of biz, for those who don't know) just for a chuckle. That's what we're seeing here.]<<<<<
—Abbra (15 00:11/3-1-54)

>>>>>[Maybe. But what scatters me is this "Hunt" of Ehran's. It's like he's training hunting dogs. He started off by rounding up a gang of lapdogs. To turn them into the killers he wanted, he had to test their mettle, put them through hardships, "blood" them. Some of them have killed now, *neh*? And isn't the second killing always easier than the first...?]<<<<<
—People Watcher (02:58:18/3-8-54)

>>>>>[The two paladins the rest look up to as their leaders—the toughest buggers, from the most important families—are Rory Donally and Bran Glendower.]<<<<<
—Max (01:04:49/3-10-54)

In a sad distortion of the ancient, chivalric notion of paladins, the majority of Tir subjects and many in the rest of the world now equate the designation paladin with "secret police." This terrorized reaction probably derives from the Hunt and the activities of paladins loyal to Lord Shen Tathern, head of the Information Secretariat, the governmental body responsible for internal security. Tathern's paladins enjoy making a show of strength, and tend to take their responsibilities and those of the Secretariat far too seriously.

In its third meaning, the Paladins refers to the High Prince's Praetorian Guard—a small, crack military unit personally loyal to the High Prince that serves as his bodyguard.

>>>>>[And as general expediters. See my comments later.]<<<<<
—Midnight Rocker (13.31:31/3-8-54)

The Paladins comprise 24 well-trained and personally selected members of the Special Forces arm of the Tir Peace Force. At least eight Paladins accompany the High Prince on any ceremonial occasion. Their dress uniform for such occasions is a distinctive body armor; partial heavy armor, sculpted to resemble ornate, matte-black, medieval-style field plate mail. The Paladins carry unsheathed broadswords as part of this uniform.

>>>>>[Elves wearing plate mail and carrying swords? Okay, you can pull my leg, but don't make a hobbit of it...(Ga-harf ga-harf.)]<<<<<
—Bung (20:35:32/3-2-54)

>>>>>[I know it sounds a little...well, *overdone*. But until you've seen a detachment of Paladins in their night-black armor, you have no idea how frogging impressive it is—*awe-inspiring* almost does the sight justice.]<<<<<
—Suzanne (15:32:37/3-4-54)

As combat uniforms, the Paladins wear standard, military-issue light or medium body armor, depending on their mission. They replace their swords with SMGs or more serious weapons (such as assault shotguns) as circumstances dictate. When in standard uniform, Paladins are easily distinguished from other officers by the absence of any regimental, divisional, or unit patches, flashes or blazons on their black jackets. Their only such designation is a single white, rectangular pin on each lapel.

>>>>>[And you can spot them by the sense of palpable menace these jokers exude.]<<<<<
—Suzanne (15:34.59/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Elves with swords? "Sense of palpable menace?" Have mercy, I'm dying here...(giggle) (sputter) (choke)]<<<<<
—Bung (19:37:41/3-7-85)

>>>>>[Go frag yourself, Bung, the lady's right.

Never seen a Paladin, huh? Imagine your typical elf. Okay. Now fill out his shoulders so he's as broad as your average ork. Give him steel-spring muscles, the grace of a cat, and a look of justified arrogance in his eyes. That's your typical Paladin.

Now put him in heavy mil-spec armor. (Okay, it's sculpted to wow the yokels, big deal, right?) Put a meat cleaver in his hand—oh, did I mention that it's a monosword, with monomolecular cutwire along the edge? Build enough state-of-the-art electronics into his helmet that he can see and hear *everything* going on around him. And, just for good measure, equip him with a top-of-the-line SMG

and an assortment of grenades in concealed compartments in that armor suit.

Now add in the speed, power, and agility of a physical adept, of some unspecified grade—but probably *pretty fragging high*. That's your typical Paladin. (Still laughing, Bung? I thought not.)]<<<<<

—Sidewinder (22.38:47/3-7-85)

>>>>>[Well said, 'winder. But there's some atypical Paladins, too. Combat mages, and razorguys wired up so hot they seem to teleport when they move.

Fortunately for the rest of the world, these bullyboys serve mainly as peacekeepers and bodyguards, that kind of drek. But sometimes the High Prince sends them on missions outside the Tir—undercover ops and stuff. I can't swear to it, but I've heard recurring rumors that a Paladin hit Seattle for some salvage work a while back.]<<<<<

—Midnight Rocker (13:11:10/3-8-54)

>>>>>[You missed a real experience, Sidewinder. I earned the dubious pleasure of facing a ceremonially armored Paladin across a deserted courtyard late one night, with him between me and where I wanted most in the world to be (which, of course, was out of the courtyard). I put everything I had into a power bolt spell and hit him with it. The spell just splattered off his armor. Didn't even scratch the surface. (I bugged out and made my escape another way, but that's neither here nor there.) I assensed the guy in the suit as mundane, but the suit itself had some heavy juju. I didn't take the time to scope out exactly what it was, but at a guess I'd say some kind of personal anti-spell barrier attuned to a spell lock incorporated into the armor. Keep that in mind if you're ever scrapping with one of these bad boys.]<<<<<

—Sal E (18:58:31:3-11-54)

The Paladins take their orders from the High Prince, *not* the Council. However, the High Prince accepts responsibility for all the Paladins' actions, so misuse of the unit or misconduct by its members strongly influences the next vote of no-confidence against the High Prince.

>>>>>[You berks are conning it all wrong. The Paladins in the ornate armor—they're not the same goons as in the uniforms. The ones in the suits, they're not pixies. They're *cyberknights*, chum, like the Knights of Harlech in the old country. Honest to god.]<<<<<

—Puddle Jumper (14:47:28/3-17-54)

>>>>>[Drek. Cyber-modified, maybe. But they're flesh and blood, not fragging robots.]<<<<<

—Link (15:20:41/3-18-54)

>>>>>[How do you *know*? Have you ever seen one lift his helmet? *No!* Because there's nothing under that helmet, just microelectronics and crap.]<<<<<

—Puddle Jumper (14 55:10/3-19-54)

>>>>>[You're wrong. There was a person in the armor I faced in the courtyard, I assensed him. I don't think he was cybered at all. But there was *something* unusual about him.]<<<<<

—Sal E (19:04:23/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Like what, Sal? Don't keep us hanging...]<<<<<

—Doc Dicer (23:51:43/3-20-54)

>>>>>[His aura just didn't *feel* like a normal human or elf. Magically enhanced? Maybe. Or something else.]<<<<<

—Sal E (21:03:41/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Genetically engineered, perhaps?]<<<<<

—Sagan (03:36:31/3-22-54)

>>>>>[Maybe.]<<<<<

—Sal E (20:29.57/3-22-54)

>>>>>[Wait. Before this goes any further; Spes is working under an incorrect assumption here. The guardsmen in black armor are *not* Paladins: they are members of the *Bratach Gheal*, the White Banner, the High Prince's personal guard and occasional muscle. Paladins are a different group.]<<<<<

—Aegis (14:50:12/3-23-54)

>>>>>[Eh? Then who are the Paladins, and why are we all so confused? The Paladins do exist, right?]<<<<<

—Johnny (11:59:02/3-25-54)

>>>>>[Yes, Johnny, Paladins exist, but only a handful, perhaps five or so. You'll never see them. They're around, but you'll never know it. The easiest, but not the best way to describe them, is as "elven ninja." I know this description sounds trite, but I'm not referring to that pop-culture image of the physical-combat master taking on armies of the opposition. Instead, think of the ninja trained as a skilled practitioner of *ninjitsu*, the silent and deadly arts. The assassin, expediter, and *provocateur* extraordinaire. This description better fits the Paladins of Tir Tairngire, who are undoubtedly hunting Spes right now.

Who commands them and to whom they are responsible remains a point of conjecture. The most interesting story I've heard is that they are not responsible to anyone *within the Tir government*. According to this slightly inebriated source, these Paladins make up an elite meta-mystical group of physical adepts whose services the High Prince commands as part of some ancient pact or tradition. They remain fanatically loyal to the High Prince as long as he maintains his end of the pact. That's the least traditional explanation I've heard, and I must point out that the teller was under the influence when he related the story.]<<<<<

—Aegis (12:02:15/3-27-54)

>>>>>[Okay, chummers, here's how I scan it; it's a scuffle between Ehran and Surehand. (And I believe that what's going on is between Ehran and Surehand, though Oakforest takes the public flack.) I'm building my theory on the scrap over the dragon Prince, on the Paladin/paladin drek, on what Spes said, and on a lot of what he *didn't* say. Check me on this, Spes, if you dare.

As I read it, Ehran and Aithne Oakforest cooked up the whole Tir concept. They decided on the whole pseudo-feudal thing,

scammed the corp support (I don't know how) and orchestrated the secession. To complete the picture, they need a figurehead on the throne, someone to take the hot seat. For some reason, neither of them takes the spotlight; maybe they didn't want to be in such a high-profile position (skeletons in the closets?). So they pulled in Lugh Surehand and put him on the throne, thinking they could manipulate him from behind the scenes. (Hand up his hoop, make his mouth move, that kind of thing.)

So now Surehand's High Prince, and he starts feeling his oats. Meanwhile, Oakforest and Ehran have their fingers in other pies, or maybe they're not working together so well anymore. While they're distracted, Surehand takes the reins, and by the time they realize their ventriloquist's dummy has a mind of its own, it's too late, and they can't take back control. Surehand wins the full backing of at least one other original Prince—Laverty—stocks the Council with talking heads and yes-men, and Ehran and Oakforest can't oust him. Ehran's choked as hell that he let his grand design be controlled by a buffoon, and now lashes out at Surehand every chance he gets.

Well? What d'ya think?]<<<<<

—Willy (12:11:52/4-12-54)

>>>>>[Sucks drek, Willy-boy. I just don't buy it. I can buy "Ehran the *eminence grise*," or I can buy "Ehran the petulant old fool." But reconciling the two takes more mental gymnastics than I can perform. Back to the drawing board, chummer. (Oh, but E for effort.)]<<<<<

—Zen Mover (15.03.17/4-14-54)

>>>>>[The true answer is, I suspect, much simpler. (Remember, Willy, that Surehand ran Portland quite capably for some time. I can't see him as anyone's puppet; having met him quite a few times, I know his strong personality precludes such subordination.) The prime movers—Ehran, Surehand, Oakforest, Laverty, and some of the newer Princes—sometimes act as allies, but they are not necessarily friends.]<<<<<

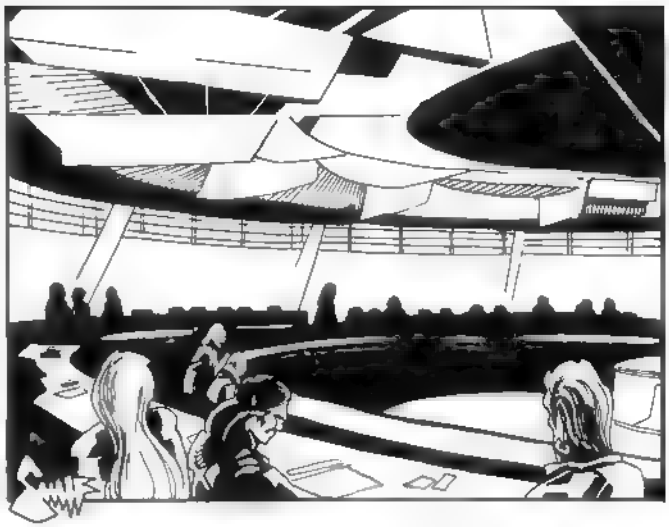
—Aegis (02·19.12/4:16:54)

STAR CHAMBER

Its founders did not conceive of Tir Tairngire as a democracy; the people of the nation had no say in its governance. For the first several years, no one appeared to mind this lack of voice. The subjects of Tir Tairngire seemed satisfied with their independent nation; democratic representation apparently did not concern them. Though some people agitated for popular participation in government, these formed a small minority.

As the rank system became more stratified and ingrained in Tir culture, those of lower rank—aware that they held decreasing expectations of ever ascending in the hierarchy—made their demands louder and more often. At first the Council and the High Prince ignored the grassroots complaints. Eventually, however, the sound and fury forced the government to listen.

The government responded to the cries for democratic representation in 2043 by creating the Chamber of Representatives, commonly known as the Star Chamber.



>>>>>[Another attempt to give a new government respectability by "borrowing" a word with historical resonance.]<<<<<

—Compton (15:02:46/2-16-54)

The government divided Tir Tairngire into 128 "ridings," or electoral districts. Each riding elected one representative, a spokesperson to the Council for that riding's concerns. All 128 representatives sit in the Star Chamber, located in Salem.

>>>>>[More than a few kilometers from the real seat of government on Royal Hill, isn't it?]<<<<<

—Lupo (14·01:10/2-24-54)

>>>>>[And that's probably just the way the Princes want it, chummer.]<<<<<

—Garnet (06:31:48/3-2-54)

Following a rigid set of rules created by the Princes, the representatives elect a chairman from among themselves, and debate the same issues as the Council of Princes. The Princes claim to keep the Star Chamber privy to all information the Council receives, except for "matters of national security," which they specifically exclude from disclosure as too sensitive for public dissemination. The Star Chamber considers the issues, hashes out options and alternative responses, and passes the results to the Council along with the representatives' recommendations. The representatives take pride in their responsibilities and the fact that they have the Council's ear.

Of course, the Star Chamber is nothing but an elaborate sham designed to quell demands for democratic representation. Officially, the Council of Princes must keep the Chamber advised of all day-to-day developments, including the reports and briefings the Princes receive from the different branches of government. Predictably, they fail dismally in this task. They occasionally toss the Chamber a bit of irrelevant information, fully aware that the debate process—with 128 participants—will keep the representatives busy. The Chamber sits daily from 09:00 to 15:30, Monday through Friday, September 1 to April 30. This barely gives the Chamber members enough time to argue their way through the

few unimportant issues the Council passes to them for consideration. Even when the Chamber manages to reach a timely conclusion, the Princes have no legal obligation to follow—or even consider—the representatives' recommendation. The constant wrangling of the representatives has as much influence on the governance of Tir Tairngire as the mewling of a basketful of kittens.

>>>>>[Surely the people recognize the Chamber for what it is. Why do they put up with it?]<<<<<
—Red Flag (15:15:25/3-14-54)

>>>>>[In general, the peepul refuse to recognize uncomfortable truths until they get their noses rubbed in them, Red old chummer. Which would you rather believe: that the big, elaborate Star Chamber actually means something, or that your own government is perpetrating a sham of epic proportions? (Okay, all you paranoid schizophrenics out there, I know how *you'll* answer. But consider the average Joe-on-the-street for a moment, who's been conditioned all his life to believe that "government assistance" isn't an oxymoron, and that "I'm from the government, I'm here to help" isn't the third great lie.)]<<<<<
—Broghan (19:15:08/3-16-54)

>>>>>[The representatives want to believe they're doing something worthwhile, too. And even if they don't believe it, they'll want their *constituents* to believe it, won't they? They get mucho status from being a representative, plus a stipend of about 22,000¥ a year, *plus* four months vacation in the summer to make even more money in whatever sleazy manner their twisted little brains can dream up. (No conflict of interest guidelines for the Star Chamber, chummers.)]<<<<<
—Lindsay (06:19:49/3-18-54)

>>>>>[Ah, but realize that the average citizen of Tir Tairngire doesn't feel like complaining. He or she lives well, believes himself part of a cultural and ideological elite, and is generally satisfied with life. The Star Chamber a sham? Odd, things seem to be working quite well.]<<<<<
—Devom (02:13:52/3-20-54)

Any permanent resident of a riding may be nominated as representative, regardless of social rank. Every permanent resident of that riding has one vote.

>>>>>[This "one-elf-one-vote" system is seriously slotting off some of the higher social ranks, who have to stand by and watch their candidates beat out by the more numerous lower castes. Look for some kind of vote-weighting system to be announced real soon.]<<<<<
—Jacko (08:44:53/3-19-54)

Representatives serve four-year terms, to a maximum of three consecutive terms.

>>>>>[Which means they've got only 12 years to feather their nests.]<<<<<
—Lindsay (04:55:30/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Despite what Broghan and Lindsay said back on 3-16-54 and 3-18-54 respectively, I think the people *are* starting to see through the sham. Oh, don't expect to hear about a "Portland Tea Party," or any drek like that. But there're rumblings in the rural areas that all's not well in the Land of Promise. Stay tuned for new developments.]<<<<<
—Tagline (17:32:38/3-24-54)

>>>>>[Oh, to be able to see and hear the internecine squabbling, backstabbing, alliance-building and -breaking going on within the Council of Princes. If Machiavelli could see it, he'd put aside his grand machinations as mere bagatelles, and bow down in dumbstruck respect at the nasty, dark, and twisted things the Princes are cooking up.]<<<<<
—Zeppo (21:00:29/3-25-54)

>>>>>[For frag's sake, don't go on about it like that. It's not as if internecine machinations are anything new. Read your history, you dog-brain. What about the Soviet Politburo? Or the Canadian Parliament/Senate? Or the Senate/Congress wrangling in the United States? Or any meeting of the NAN Sovereign Tribal Council? The Princes don't have a monopoly on situational ethics and a quick knife up the strap.]<<<<<
—Hank Ford (07:01:38/3-30-54)

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

So far, I have related what I know about the structure of the Tir Tairngire government. The following material deals with the vital point of how the population interacts with that government. The ways in which the rigid, self-serving, and self-perpetrating Tir bureaucracy directly touches people's lives and liberties raises important issues.

RIGHTS VS. PRIVILEGES

One aspect in which Tir Tairngire differs drastically from the UCAS, and from most other nations of North America, is in the rights and privileges granted its inhabitants. Legally registered nationals of the Tir are *subjects* (as in the United Kingdom), rather than citizens, and the words reflect vastly different philosophies. "Citizen" implies a kind of participation in the country and its government—"government of the people, by the people, and for the people," and so on. "Subject" suggests a submission to authority, as in the word "subjugate."

The citizens of nations like the UCAS possess certain rights, guaranteed in the Bill of Rights and similar documents. These rights are inalienable, and even the government cannot infringe upon them except through extreme actions such as a War Measures Act, martial law, or the equivalent. Most democratic nations place stringent controls on the government's freedom to invoke such measures.

In contrast, the subjects of Tir Tairngire have no rights. What most of the nation's residents consider "rights" are actually privileges granted by the High Prince and the Council, who can revoke them at will and without warning. Most of these privileges are the same as the rights UCAS citizens enjoy: free speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and so on. However—and I cannot stress this enough—the government can rescind these privileges at any time, redefine their terms, limit their application, and so on, *without warning and without justifying its actions*. These changes may be as universal or specific as the Council sees fit. A single individual might find his freedom of speech rescinded, and have no way to regain it.

>>>>>[Legally.]<<<<<
—Armbuster (17:24:16/2-15-54)

>>>>>[Yes. Legally.]<<<<<
—Spes (21:41:12/2-26-54)

>>>>>[Has this actually happened? The government telling someone, "You know those rights you thought you had? Wrongo!"?]<<<<<
—Gallagher (03:42 26/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Yes. More times to my personal knowledge than I care to recall.]<<<<<
—Spes (21 01 55/3-4-54)

>>>>>[It happened to you, didn't it, Spes? That's why you're doing this.]<<<<<
—Holly (13:17:03/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Yes.]<<<<<
—Spes (23:41:01/3-6-54)

>>>>>[I'm sure I'll catch some drek for saying this, but so what? The Tir keeps its subjects safe and secure, and all it asks in return is that they follow the law. Those who do are afforded certain rights and privileges. Those who do not become criminals and lose those privileges. Each individual makes the choice.]<<<<<
—Aegis (19:51:39/3-8-54)

>>>>>[In an ideal world, the system would work. But the potential for abuse is staggering, Aegis. The subjects of Tir Tairngire have no defense or protection against the government deciding that they are undesirable or dangerous. History abounds with the kind of abuses I'm talking about. Only since the democratic revolutions has the average person gained any kind of security from oppressive governments. When it created its system of government, the Tir renounced all of that progressive thought and philosophy and reclassified man with the animal.]<<<<<
—Locksmith (08.51 31/3-9-54)

>>>>>[But is the problem with the policy, or the people implementing it? Let's leave this discussion to the politics and philosophy forums. I know the line of discussion is relevant here, but I've seen issues like this explode to 200+ Mp of file in a few hours. If you want to knock this softball around, move to the next field.]<<<<<
—Captain Chaos (17:52:40/3-10-54)

TREASON

The government of Tir Tairngire considers treason the nation's most heinous crime. The Tir defines "treason" in the loosest possible terms, and the Council and High Prince may refine the definition as it suits them. In general terms, "treason" is defined as any action that causes harm, or has the potential to cause harm, to the nation-state of Tir Tairngire.

>>>>>[Pretty fragging loose definition. In the UCAS, I could tie up the court on a case based on something like that for years and turn the government into an international laughingstock for even trying it.]<<<<<
—Legal Beagle (17:54.43/3-3-54)

>>>>>[By that definition, what you're doing is treason, isn't it, Spes?]<<<<<
—Holly (13:21:39/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Yes. Aegis as well.]<<<<<
—Spes (23:42:05/3-6-54)

Those convicted of treason may be sentenced to life imprisonment or death, the more common penalty.

The definition of and punishment for treason relates directly to the discussion of privileges because, depending on the mood of the government at the moment, acting as though one holds a privilege that the Council has revoked can be seen as treason. Such a situation serves as the best example of the arbitrary and total

physical and intellectual control the Tir government exerts over the natives of that nation.

>>>>>[So, if the government suddenly revokes freedom of religion and I continue to worship the Great Ghu (or my left foot or whatever) in defiance of that decree, then I'm committing treason and potentially for the chop? *Scary...*]<<<<<
—Linebacker (22:05:49/3-2-54)

CHALLENGING THE GOVERNMENT

Unlike many other autocratic nations, Tir Tairngire created channels through which its subjects can appeal specific government actions. Like the Star Chamber, however, these channels more often provide an illusion of influence than the reality.

If a Tir subject feels wronged by his government, he can appeal to the Star Chamber through his riding's representative. If the representative considers the issue worth pursuing, he or she brings it before the other representatives for discussion. If the Star Chamber alone can resolve the complaint, it does so, though this seldom happens because the Star Chamber wields very little real power. It also may opt to pass the issue on to the Council of Princes, but usually does so only if it considers the matter important. Once the Chamber representatives pass the appeal to the Council, the Princes decide whether or not to rule on it.

>>>>>[And since they're the "government" that wronged the poor fragger in the first place, they'll circular-file it and go back to their cakes and ale, right?]<<<<<
—Verity (17:59:49/2-18-54)

>>>>>[Not every time. Sometimes the Council, or even the High Prince, trots out a case and makes a big media sideshow out of reversing the damage. PR, pure and simple, but *effective* PR.]<<<<<
—The Big Eye (01:06:10/2-21-54)

>>>>>[So what's the fragging point of this challenge system? The representatives themselves probably slough off most cases, acting only on those with PR potential for them (or is that too cynical?). And the Star Chamber does the same effing thing; they know all too well how little attention the Princes pay to their blathering. And the Princes themselves don't give a flying frag. So why waste time and breath discussing it?]<<<<<
—Verity (15:03:16/2-22-54)

>>>>>[Because the people need the illusion that the government listens to their problems. They see the one or two cases a year where the High Prince grants the appeal in a glare of publicity and they feel all warm and squishy because Princes really do look out for the little guy. Dupes.]<<<<<
—The Big Eye (17:30:04/2-24-54)

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Diplomatic relations between Tir Tairngire and the other nations of North America are, in a word, strained. The Tir pursues its international goals in a way that gives it a well-deserved reputation for demanding extensive concessions while yielding none. For example, if another nation agrees to allow Tir Tairngire to set up a consulate, the Tir frequently demands the host country grant it land for that purpose. Countries desiring trade with the Tir must grant space within airports, port facilities, and so on to establish Tir customs and immigration offices. The Tir usually demands that the consulate be officially considered Tir Tairngire territory, subject *only* to Tir laws. Though this is common practice for consulates, the Council of Princes demands the same concession for its customs and immigration facilities.

>>>>>[Pay attention now, runners. Let's say you jander up to the TT customs/immigration booth at SeaTac with your ever-so-wiz forged VAV. The slot working the desk scans it and sees you're passing bad data—knows you're trying to get into the Tir on forged authorization.

"So what?" you ask. "I'm still in Seattle. What can he do? Hold my hand until a Lone Star officer arrives to slap my wrist?"

Not quite. Every runner who does his or her research knows that the Tir claims extraterritoriality (and makes its own laws, too): you are officially on TT territory, and subject to its (unpleasant) laws concerning illegal entry. You're for the highjump, big time.]<<<<<
—Mimosa (11:48:02/3-8-54)

Before *Cinanestial*, the Tir Tairngire national airline, agrees to establish a route to another country, that country's government must accept the Tir's demands for extraterritoriality of its customs and consulate. Currently, the Tir maintains this agreement with the following countries: UCAS (Seattle and Chicago), Japan, Great

gonkian-Manitou. Tir Tairngire's apparently reciprocal relations with Tir Nan Og appear in a separate discussion below.

>>>>>[At one point, the Tir stood on the verge of coming to a similar customs/consulate agreement with the Salish-Shidhe. But then the Salish-Shidhe Council got wind of the Tir's intention to ship much of their trade through Seattle, treating the Amerinds like so much drek. The tribal council attempted to make their granting of consular and immigration territoriality contingent on the Tir canceling the Seattle deal, but the Princes basically told them, "Frag you and the horse you rode in on," and that was that.]<<<<<

—McD (12:04:19/3-21-54)

>>>>>[The S-S Council came out all right. Now it makes quite a haul in fees and tariffs from all the cargo that travels through S-S lands from Seattle to Portland and the Tir. And the Seattle deal made it all possible.

My question is, since the Tir and the S-S don't really get along, how does the deal work? Why would the Tir give the S-S Council the power to cut them off from Seattle, their trade source? Does anybody have any answers?]<<<<<

—Querent (07:28:51/4-13-54)

Beginning in early 2037, the Tir Council has regularly and repeatedly extended a symbolic olive branch toward the California Free State government, in the form of expanded trade relations between the two nations. Sacramento accepts the offers of increased trade at each offering, but continues to refuse to allow a Tir consulate or other facilities to open on California territory.

>>>>>[Fragging A!]<<<<<

—Redding Vet (12:44:56/2-24-54)

No official diplomatic channels exist between the Tir and Aztlan, though many *un*official channels of communication no doubt exist

>>>>>[You want to hear a real nasty story about some of the unofficial communication? Here's the scoop: since the beginning, Aztlan's been trying to destabilize the Tir government, using infiltrators, *agents provocateurs*, and every dirty trick imaginable. According to this story, the last mission attempted was a sabotage job, blowing up a power plant in Portland. (You know the drill; black out the city, watch the citizens tear the place up.) Anyhow, the Peace Force tracked the ops agent before he could plant the bombs, and vanished him.

So far, so what, you say. Here's where it got nasty. They hooked the poor chummer to a simsense recording rig and tortured him to death. Then they burned his hours of unspeakable agony onto a BTL chip, duped it, and sent a personally addressed copy to each major player in the Aztlan government.]<<<<<

—I Spy (23:41:20/3-14-54)

TIR TAIRNGIRE AND TIR NAN OG

The relationship between Tir Tairngire and Tir Nan Og (formerly Ireland) seems confusing and contradictory to outside observers, and only slightly less so to subjects of the Tir. Perhaps even the Council of Princes still wonders at the exact form of the relationship.

Tir Tairngire maintains a customs and immigration facility at Shannon Airport and a consulate in Dublin. Tir Nan Og has customs facilities at Morningstar Field and consulates in both Portland and Salem. These reciprocal arrangements imply that Tir Tairngire and Tir Nan Og are on good terms.

The truth is far more complex. Though the Tir has more extensive and efficient communications channels and closer diplomatic ties with its European cousin than with any other nation on earth, the traffic passing through those channels is far from brotherly.

To non-elven eyes, Tir Tairngire seems a mysterious, strange, even threatening place. To those same eyes Tir Nan Og must appear as a darker rendering of Tir Tairngire, like an image in a nightmare. In fact, each nation sees the other as a perverted reflection of itself. The Princes of Tir Tairngire see Tir Nan Og as a place of uncontrolled mysticism, magic run wild. The scions of Tir Nan Og, in turn, view Tir Tairngire as a promised land tainted by the corruption of technology and the suppression of wild magic. Each land wishes to influence the other back to the "true path."

>>>>>[Tir Nan Og's darker and more twisted than the Tir? Cancel my fishing trip...]<<<<<

—Bung (13:16:12/2-18-54)

Each government accords the other great respect, and strong currents of respect, if not affection, also run between individual members of the ruling councils.

>>>>>[Some say that Ehran the Scribe has close allies, confidantes, even friends, among the Nan Og rulers, though none can divine his purposes or the motives behind those alliances.]<<<<<

—Dour (19:14:10/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Ehran the Scribe again. Everybody's focused on Ehran the bloody Scribe. He's not High Prince, he's not even on the fraggin' Council: why does everyone pay him so much attention?]<<<<<

—Io (21:51:00/3-22-54)

>>>>>[Because in many ways, Ehran appears to be the pivotal figure in the most important power plays. Granted, he maintains a lower profile than Prince Aithne, and exerts less overt influence than High Prince Surehand. But profile does not equal importance, nor overt influence real power. Ehran is a key figure in the Tir, perhaps *the* key figure.]<<<<<

—Dour (20.01 55/3-24-54)

>>>>>[Just to help clarify a point that will come up later in this document, it needs to be said here that much of Tir Tairngire's nature not only renounces the structures and conventions of modern (Western) society, but *specifically* rejects the tenets upon which Tir Nan Og was founded. The Tir founders made decisions, mostly cultural, that deliberately opposed the customs of the Irish elven nation. This intentional dichotomy must serve a function, but I cannot determine what. I have always believed that the connections between the two nations (on a personal level between their leaders) are

much stronger (positively or negatively) than either wish to admit.]<<<<<

—Aegis (03:39:50/3-27-54)

POLITICAL PROFILES

Little is known about the five Princes who wield the real power in Tir Tairngire, but I offer these limited biographies, pieced together from public datanets, rumor, and my own personal observations. I encourage readers to post any additional information they know.

LUGH SUREHAND

Physical Characteristics:

Height: Above average
Date of Birth: Unknown
Weight: Above average for height
Parents: Unknown
Hair Color: Dark red
Eye Color: Green
Distinguishing Features: Red/brown beard, an old scar cutting across right shoulder and halfway up right side of neck.

Personal Information:

Lugh Surehand is the first, and thus far only, High Prince of Tir Tairngire. Political pundits call him a compromiser, and that quality apparently makes him the linchpin that keeps the otherwise volatile Council of Princes from flying apart. He relies heavily on his advisors, regularly consulting with trusted companions and field specialists before making decisions.

Unmarried, Surehand has no known offspring. His most frequent public companion is Countess Karen Teargan, a young noblewoman with family connections in the Tir financial market. Their true relationship remains a mystery, though she makes extended stays in or adjacent to Surehand's residence at Royal Hill.

>>>>>[I think much of Surehand's reputation as a puppet of the ruling five comes from his apparent willingness to compromise. Though he seems easily manipulated, in fact he knows exactly what he is doing, and how his actions look to others.]<<<<<

—Aegis (08:18:12/3-15-54)

>>>>>[I know of at least one straightforward assassination attempt against Surehand. It happened back in June of 2047, when the High Prince was on a tour of Eugene (spirits know why). Someone took a shot at him during his inspection of one of the municipal buildings. A nice, professional shot, timed and silenced, the whole bit. A fraction of a second before the bullet hit, a magical shield sprang up around the High Prince and stopped the bullet cold, left it hanging in the air. No warning, no nothing. Needless to say, his security got him out of there *fast*, but it went down so quickly that even the people with him weren't really sure what happened, and so the Tir government managed to keep it quiet.]<<<<<

—Darkheart (09:17:59/3-17-54)

>>>>>[Sounds like a triggered physical shield to me, probably structured on that new "anchoring" metamagic theory making the rounds these days.]<<<<<

—Wizard Walt (12:10:54/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Sure does, but remember that this happened in *2047*. The anchoring theorems weren't published until 2053. Interesting stuff. I would be more interested in knowing how Darkheart got his info on the attempt. Personal experience?]<<<<<

—Allard (07:17.30/3-20-54)

AITHNE OAKFOREST

Physical Characteristics:

Height: Below average
Date of Birth: Unknown
Weight: Average for height
Parents: Unknown
Hair Color: Black
Eye Color: Blue
Distinguishing Features: Though he wears his hair at the fashionable collar-length, his square jaw and chiseled features leave little *fae* or delicate about Aithne Oakforest.

Personal Information:

Believed to be Lugh Surehand's closest friend and advisor, Aithne Oakforest always seems tightly wound, wielding a sharp tongue and barely controlling his temper. As might be expected, he appears to be the least flexible of the inner five Princes.

Oakforest's wife is the former Maria Delmarco, who took the self-name Mealla Oakforest upon her marriage to him in 2029. Their union produced three children: Glasgian, born in 2030, Tealla, born in 2033, and Elleara, born in 2038. For the past three years, Oakforest and his wife have maintained separate resi-

dences, though they are still married.

>>>>>[The eldest Oakforest child, Glasgian, is proving himself something of a wild card. Despite his father's efforts to groom Glasgian for a position in the Tir government, maybe even a Council position, he seems determined to antagonize his father's peers. He's abrasive, impulsive, and Machiavellian. A true elf of the Tir.]<<<<<
—Brewster (19:25:10/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Eyewitnesses place Glasgian on the grounds of various Andalusian Light Industry facilities, lending credence to the rumor that the Oakforest family holds interests in the company.]<<<<<
—Glower (10:23:51/3-12-54)

>>>>>[Hey! Doesn't anybody have anything on Oakforest Sr.?]<<<<<
—Blather (20.16.40/3-18-54)

>>>>>[I do know one odd thing about Aithne. Oakforest's wife Mealla once re-landscaped one of their rural residences as a surprise for her husband, who was out of the country. She used magic to mature the new plantings within a week, and the result was a stunning testament to Mealla's artistic talents. Oakforest loved the garden, until he saw that Mealla had bordered much of the rear in red and white rose bushes. At the sight of the thorny bushes, Oakforest flew into a rage and tore them out using his own magic. Mealla was heartbroken, because of the destruction and because her husband refused to tell her why he'd done it. She never forgave him, and this incident contributed to their separation.]<<<<<
—Aegis (08 27:09/3-15-54)

SEAN LAVERTY

Physical Characteristics:

Height: Average
Date of Birth: Unknown
Weight: Slightly above average for height
Parents: Unknown
Hair Color: Dark red
Eye Color: Green
Distinguishing Features: Unlike most of his contemporaries, Laverty is clean-shaven.

Personal Information:

The least technologically oriented of the ruling five Princes, Laverty's opposition to the Tir's increasing reliance on technology seems almost fevered at times. He gives substantial backing to several back-to-nature and so-called "green" organizations in the

Tir, but rather than being anti-technology, Laverty seems mainly concerned with the dehumanizing aspects of its applications.

Laverty apparently has no immediate family or romantic relationships at this time. Like Ehran, Laverty surrounds himself with a cadre of followers, most of whom maintain as low a profile as their leader.

>>>>>[Laverty's past is difficult to track, but it does exist. A Sean Laverty matching the Prince's description, living in the Pacific Northwest, near the turn of the century helped organize and run something called the Xavier Foundation, which supported an exclusive boarding school/orphanage south of Portland. The Foundation looked like a straight charity, but Foundation employees actually sifted through the records of the foster care and orphanage systems of Oregon and Washington states, offering to care for specific orphans. Because the Foundation was so well respected (within certain circles), the state-run agencies rarely refused their requests for children. After all, who would deny one of these orphaned children the chance for the care and education offered by the Xavier Foundation?

Based on comments earlier in this document, it's a safe bet that Laverty and the Foundation were collecting spike babies in the Pacific Northwest (and elsewhere) prior to the Awakening.]<<<<<

—Ace Detective (23.12.01/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Again, this implies some people knew about the Awakening Why didn't they warn us? Are they just sitting back and laughing?? Damn them Damn them all.]<<<<<

—Wisher (03:02:18/3-22-54)

>>>>>[Why didn't they tell? Power, pure and simple. If you know something is going to happen, you can prepare for it, and manage yourself into a position of power once it does. Laverty and the others seem to be masters of this strategy.]<<<<<

—Keal (13:16:52/3-25-54)

>>>>>[Do not defame Sean Laverty this way. His ideals are pure and his goals humanitarian. All plans, like all men, are not evil.]<<<<<

—Seer (19:48:34/3-26-54)

EHRAN THE SCRIBE

Physical Characteristics:

Height: Above average
Date of Birth: Unknown
Weight: Above average for height
Parents: Unknown
Hair: Blond
Eye Color: Blue
Distinguishing Features: Ehran wears his hair unstylishly short, and has a small scar on his left eyebrow.

Personal Information:

Best known for his series of pop-sociology works, including *The New Magic: Life After 2001*, *Metagenes: Future Spiral*, the Pulitzer-prize winning *Mankind Ascendant* and its recent sequel, *Mankind Revealed*, Ehran is the secret driving force behind Tir politics, and often finds himself at odds with his fellow Princes. He

firmly believes that the elven/Tir culture must use and develop modern technology to prosper. To further this goal, he supports professional/political groups like the Young Elven Technologists.

Like others of his generation, Ehran has no known family, though rumors of a daughter have circulated Royal Hill for more than a year. Rumor also credits him with many mistresses, the most prominent being Countess Elizabeth Kay who, along with her brother David, owns some of the most expensive (and profitable) real estate in Portland.

>>>>>[Ehran the Fraggin' Scribe. Why didn't he just call the damn place "Ehranland" and be done with it?]<<<<<

—Cynic Supreme (08:17:54/3-12-54)

>>>>>[He tried, but they voted him down.]<<<<<

—Aegis (08.36:12/3-15-54)

>>>>>[WHAT?]<<<<<

—Cynic Supreme (10.12:45/3-16-54)

>>>>>[That's a joke, son.]<<<<<

—Aegis (09:12:32/3-18-54)

>>>>>[Ehran the Scribe is a dangerous man. He wields a great deal of personal power and far-reaching political power. I can see a time when Ehran will decide he doesn't enjoy working from behind the scenes anymore. When that happens, watch out.]<<<<<

—Conrad (07:17:15/3-19-54)

>>>>>[We've talked a lot about immortal elves and such, but here's a little perspective: I've got socks older than Ehran the Scribe.]<<<<<

—The Laughing Man (16:51:42/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Yeah, too bad you haven't washed them in just as long.]<<<<<

—The Big 'D' (20:16.43/3-23-54)

JENNA NI'FAIRRA

Physical Characteristics:

Height: Above average
Date of Birth: Unknown
Weight: Average for height
Parents: Unknown
Hair Color: White-blond
Eye Color: Green
Distinguishing Features: Jenna wears her thick, long hair in an ever-changing variety of styles.

Personal Information:

Even in such an elusive group as the ruling five, Ni'Fairra maintains the closest silence. She keeps a low public profile, but argues vehemently and well in Council chambers. Believed the most mystical and spiritual of the five original Princes, she is a powerful sorceress. Ni'Fairra stands as the most openly racist of the group, rarely hiding her disdain for humans and the "lesser forms" (other metahumans).

She apparently has no family. Her frequent companion for a time was Count Gerard McCoy, a civilian member of the Board of Military Advisors with which the Council consults on military matters. McCoy disappeared from public view many months ago, and rampant rumors say that he died on a secret mission for the High Prince.

>>>>>[Ni'Fairra is surely an enigma. Except for her name, even Tir nobles know nothing about her. The rumors that reach me say that she is often at odds with Ehran over matters of policy and state. This would appear to put her closer to Laverty's camp, but she battles with him, too. Like most of the Princes, she plays a game of which only she knows the rules.]<<<<<
—Aegis (09:08:12/3-15-54)

>>>>>[I was in Ni'Fairra's home once (near Crater Lake) and saw some amazing things. One particular thing I thought odd at the time, but I had forgotten about it until I read Aegis's entry above about Oakforest's reaction to the rose bushes. I saw a painting there, about two meters tall by one and a half meters wide, and it felt *old*. The painting showed signs of decay and cracking, and it was kept in a sealed glass frame connected to what I think was a vacuum pump. The subject of the painting was a woman, so similar in feature to Jenna Ni'Fairra that I initially took it as a painting of her, or a close relative. The woman wore a sheer gown of layered black and silver silk and lace that somehow combined a tailored fit and casual draping. She was (needless to say) stunningly beautiful—except for the thorns

She wasn't wearing thorns, they were part of her. Jutting from and piercing her skin, tearing through or distending the cloth of her gown where it was too thick or tightly woven. The thorns, sharp and glistening with fresh blood, *were growing from her body*. At first I was repulsed, but the more I looked the more I was drawn to this beautiful, pained woman. The artist caught her perfectly: serene, powerful beauty and eternal agony. It haunts me to this day.]<<<<<
—Anonymous (13:53:19/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Ah yes, our dear sweet Blood Queen. Now there is a tale to be told.]<<<<<
—The Laughing Man (08:52:41/3-22-54)

>>>>>[Then tell it.]<<<<<
—The Big 'D' (10:12:51/3-23-54)

>>>>>[In time.]<<<<<
—The Laughing Man (21.48 30/3-23-54)

TIR SOCIETY

Tir Tairngire created its social structure from a hodgepodge of cultural traditions, making it unique in the modern world and drastically different from the social climate of the UCAS and Seattle. With nothing to compare it to, it becomes almost impossible to describe the social structure of the Tir in recognizable terms. This file attempts to highlight the most important and unique aspects of Tir society by presenting each topic as a subsection. I will attempt to show how each topic fits into the fabric of society as a whole, but encourage informed readers to help fill the gaps.

RACE

When the elves announced Tir Tairngire's independence, they proclaimed it a haven for all metahumans, all the oppressed victims of blind human prejudice and xenophobia. Ork, troll, dwarf, elf—the Tir charter welcomed every metahuman race. Examining present-day Tir Tairngire, however, proves that charter a sham.

Various factors combined to make the Tir predominately elven, and those factors continue to shape its social structure. Because the true "founding father" of the nation, Ehran the Scribe (alias Walter Bright Water), was an elf, many more elves followed him into the region than any other metatype. Some dwarves came at the same time, but not many. Though the immigrants made no overt attempt to exclude orks or trolls, few of those metatypes followed the call south because these metatypes preferred urban areas, and they felt inhibited by what they saw as the social arrogance of the elven majority.

>>>>>[There was a lot of "unsanctioned" bigotry and racism being spread around. Walter (or whoever) himself didn't initiate it, but lots of his elven followers made fragging sure that orks and trolls knew they weren't welcome.]<<<<<

—Bongo (18:41:10/3-1-54)

Later, when the elves issued their international invitation to metahumans to live in what would become Tir Tairngire, the most direct and cogent invitations went to elves—influential elves (children of important families, and so on), at that. Though proponents of metahuman rights touted this invitation as a "clarion call" to oppressed metahumans to come to the Land of Promise, few of the truly oppressed could afford to make the journey. Though many countries throughout North America and elsewhere would gladly have let their metahuman populations leave, bureaucracy and lack of money held them back. Many governments, anticipating huge losses in tax revenues and federal funding triggered by mass migration, maintained their restrictions on emigration. Even in those countries that opened their borders to allow unrestricted metahuman emigration, few of the Awakened could afford to pick up and move lock, stock, and barrel to another country, in some cases another continent, with no guarantee of a job at the other end. Rich and influential individuals did not face these problems, and because elves are proportionately the richest and most influential metatype, they made up the majority of the influx.

>>>>>[Racist claptrap.]<<<<<

—Ork And Proud Of It (14:31:42/2-19-54)

>>>>>[Hold the phone. I just checked the databases, and Spes is right, statistically speaking. Now why is that, I wonder?]<<<<<

—Teacher (23:18:24/2-20-54)

>>>>>[Wealth and influence go hand in hand with good nutrition and exceptional overall health. No drek: if you're poor, you don't eat as well and you get sick easier, right? And there's some evidence that the result of UGE depends partially on the subject's nutritional habits, immune system function, and so on. Well-fed, healthy people more often gave birth to elves; malnourished people more often give birth to children who later changed into orks and trolls. Wouldn't that help explain why there are more rich elves? They—or their families—were rich and influential before they Awakened.]<<<<<

—Connie (06:48.06/2-25-54)

>>>>>[It might, Connie, if that research hadn't been discredited some months back. Turns out the lab was funded by the Humanis Policlub, and the two chief researchers were card-carrying polis.]<<<<<

—Slats (14:41 00/2-25-54)

>>>>>[But the results sound so reasonable. Where's the usual Humanis anti-metahuman drek?]<<<<<

—Connie (06:12:49/2-26-54)

>>>>>[It came out in the next set of results. According to those, if you're malnourished, you'll become an ork or troll. If you're better-nourished, you'll be an elf. But if you're totally healthy—"pure in body and mind"—you won't goblinize at all! Recognize the Humanis poison now?]<<<<<

—Slats (17:21 52/2-26-52)

Even before the nation's official founding, elves comprised the most common metatype in the Tir Tairngire region by a slight margin. Predictably, this skewed both immigration and emigration figures for the future. Because most people feel more comfortable when surrounded by others like them, proportionately more elves moved to the Tir than any other metatype. As a result, members of other metatypes eventually felt outnumbered, and moved out.

The situation polarized even more in 2036, when the Tir invaded northern California. After the Battle of Redding, the Council of Princes demanded that all non-elves leave the territory won from California.

>>>>>[What? Other metatypes too? So what happened to welcoming *all* metahumans into the Tir?]<<<<<

—B-Boy (04:18:58/2-19-54)

>>>>>[What happened to it? That policy was never more than pretty fiction. Bright Water/Ehran, Laverty, and the rest knew exactly what kind of nation they wanted to build. The Council justified the California situation real nice: they claimed they had proof that the other metatypes were subversives, already working to destroy the fabric of California from within, and they refused to allow such rabble-rousers into the new Land of Promise. What a bunch of bulldrek.]<<<<<

—Zoner (15:08 41/2-26-54)

The elves living in the newly occupied territory had the choice of becoming Tir Tairngire subjects, or moving out. Most chose to join the Tir, dazzled by the High Prince's talk of a purely metahuman land.

>>>>>[You can bet those California elves knew what he was *really* saying—a purely *elven* land.]<<<<<

—Zoner (15:10:02/2-26-54)

Those few elves who rejected the Tir's offer moved further south, out of the occupied (and later contested) zone. They hated the Council and the Tir for playing on racial prejudice, and quickly became the nation's most vehement foes within California.

Since that time, elven immigration into Tir Tairngire has slowed—largely because of other governments' tightening restrictions—but has not stopped. A few individuals of other metatypes continue to enter the country via various systems, though many times more are turned away. In fact, for metatypes other than elves, emigration exceeds immigration. The proportion of elves in the Tir remains high, and climbs ever higher.

DISCRIMINATION

As might be expected from the terms of their founding charter, discrimination against any metatype is illegal within Tir Tairngire according to every book of law. When a dissatisfied subject or anyone else accuses the government of racist actions, it simply points to the Tir's anti-discrimination laws, truthfully claiming them as the most stringent and far-reaching on the continent. However, the government rarely enforces these grand laws, and then only to the benefit of the elves.

Legally, no form of racial discrimination is sanctioned in employment, accommodation, club memberships, public transit, restaurants, immigration, emigration, taxation, pricing, public office, and advancement in social rank (see **Social Rank**, p. xx). Reality provides a chillingly different story. Some obvious examples of how easily the Tir's subjects abuse these laws follow.

Employment: Tir Tairngire has no "affirmative action" program, and no required representation of different metatypes in the work place. According to the law, every job opening is publicly posted, and the position awarded to the best-suited applicant. If an unsuccessful candidate can prove that the employer awarded the job on any other basis, such as race, the government can slap the employer with a staggering fine. Of course, the burden of proof lies with the unsuccessful candidate, and the ambiguous phrase "best-suited" makes it almost impossible to prove racial discrimination.

Rental Accommodation and Club/Organization Membership: In both situations, the candidate's "fitness" and "suitability" again serve as the key, legal criteria. A landlord or membership committee may reject an "unsuitable" applicant without penalty, unless that applicant can prove racial motives for the rejection.

Daily Life: Few elves in the Tir offer open rudeness or other abuse toward non-elves. Instead, they act with a kind of "dumb insolence," a feigned ignorance or indifference.

>>>>>[Scan this. Biz took me to Portland last year, and while I was there I hit this ritzy restaurant I'd been told had wiz food. I'm human, the guy I'm with is human, and I figure the maître d' will hassle us.

But he lets us in smooth as silk. We even got a decent table. So I sit and watch elves come in and get seated. And get the menu. And get drinks. And get served. And we're still sitting there like puds, waiting for the cocktail waiter to acknowledge our existence. Eventually I kick up a ruckus, and finally the waiter comes over and takes our order.

And everything's wrong. Gin martini instead of vodka. Well-done steak instead of blue-rare. Extra capers instead of hold the capers. All delivered with the politest expressions I've ever seen.

We struggle on through to the end of the meal, and I'm looking forward to leaving no tip at all, or maybe a single Polish zloti under an inverted water glass. And then I find out the gratuity's already on the bill. Insult to injury.]<<<<<

—Millicent (16:29:43/3-10-54)

>>>>>[One of my chummers is staying in Portland for a while, and he got so slotted off about this kind of drek that he decided to do something about it. He went into his favorite abusive restaurant, and recorded the entire debacle with his headware. He took the record to the cops, and laid charges.

To make a long story short, he won the case. The restaurant paid a fine of 1,000¥ and my chummer's legal costs. *But*, my friend put a total of 50 hours into the issue, over a period of six weeks. What's the value of *your* time, chummers? My friend figures the whole thing cost him about 4,000¥ in lost productivity, and in the end nothing really changed. *Not* worth the effort.]<<<<<

—Randy (11:32:02/2-27-54)

Public Office: In the Tir, public office means sitting in the Star Chamber. Each riding elects representatives according to a democratic process. All but two ridings in the Tir have a predominately elven population. The other two, Hells Canyon and Malheur, lie far from the urban axis and are rarely considered in major decisions. No predominately elven riding has ever elected a non-elf, and that is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

>>>>>[These comments show only part of the truth. As Representative for the Clackamas Riding, I take exception to the implications of racism. Clackamas Riding has never elected a non-elf Representative because no non-elf has ever put herself or himself forward as a candidate.]<<<<<

—Sean Fitzgibbons (09:31:33/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Couldn't be because non-elves know they wouldn't have a chance of winning...nah...]<<<<<

—Willis (21:19:41/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Let's talk about another issue here: pricing. In lots of places—particularly upscale stores—you're going to pay a lot more for everything if you don't have those precious pointy wittle ears. It's not that the stores *raise* prices for humans or other metatypes; that would be (gasp!) *illegal*. Instead, the merchants simply inflate the posted prices anywhere from 10 percent to 25 percent. If you're a non-elf, you pay the posted prices (no bargaining allowed). For elves, the store drops the markup, so they pay the real price. This *isn't* illegal: there's no law against giving "regular customers" a discount. Sly, huh?]<<<<<

—Margo (23:47:28/3-19-54)

>>>>>[And try this one on. You know how here in Seattle everybody complains about the hassle of filing tax returns and keeping all the lies straight? (Those miserable liners who actually *pay* taxes, that is.) The government's rationale for forcing the taxpayer to work out his or her own taxes—kind of like asking the torture victim to tighten his own thumbscrews, to my mind—is to a) save the guvmint money on accountants; and b) give the taxpayers a sense of participation in the whole process. (I wouldn't lie to you...about this.)

In the Tir, they gave up the whole participatory thing as a bad job. The government simply calculates how much tax you owe—based, apparently, on some torturously complex formula, a handful of dice, and a dartboard—and sends you the bill. (This only reflects anything they neglected to withhold at source, of course.) There's no way to appeal the total, and no way to find out exactly why your bill came out to what it did.

Interesting, isn't it, that an ork or troll working in the same job as an elf, with the same kind of lifestyle, will consistently pay more than his pointy-eared colleague?]<<<<<

—The Chromed Bookkeeper (09:59:49/3-22-54)

>>>>>[I don't believe this. Tir Tairngire was supposed to be founded as a sanctuary for victims of racism. Now it's become a *bastion* of the same small-minded bigotry it opposed. Where's the justice in that?]<<<<<

—Latimer (10.41:26/3-25-54)

>>>>>[I guess the elves figure they get fragged everywhere else in the world, so they have the right to frag everyone else in the Tir. (Sort of reminds you of another country somewhere else in the world, doesn't it?)]<<<<<

—Jacob (07:04:12/3-27-54)

MAJORITY

One of the pivotal times in a Tir subject's life is his or her passage from childhood to adulthood, known as gaining majority. The legal age of majority is 18. (The founders initially established the Tir's age of majority at 16, a few years younger than the average age of most elves at the time. The Council officially raised the age of majority to 17 in 2045, and 18 in 2052.) The law treats persons younger than 18 as minors, or children. A minor cannot vote, cannot speak before the Star Chamber or the Council of Princes, cannot own property (regardless of social rank), cannot purchase or consume alcohol, and cannot emigrate from the Tir. Further, any of the privileges granted to each subject can be revoked at any time *by a minor's parents*, and the minor has no legal recourse to challenge this action. Both parents must agree to revoke a minor's privileges.

These laws apply equally to all subjects of the Tir.

>>>>>[Expect to be ID'd every time you go into a Tir bar, or hit a bottle shop for a liter of beer. Oh, don't have ID? That *is* a problem...]<<<<<

—Bacchus (20 10:34/2-8-54)

>>>>>[Gah, what a horrid strait-laced kind of place, where a kid's parents can ground her *and it's got the force of law.*]<<<<<
—Wendy (19:59:23/2-11-54)

>>>>>[I'd like to see my folks try that...]<<<<<
—Sixteen Forever (12:31:59/2-12-54)

>>>>>[This must put a lot of minors on the streets.]<<<<<
—Davey (17:53.12/2-13-54)

>>>>>[No kidding. Mostly among the orks and trolls, of course.]<<<<<
—Socio Pat (10·27:48/2-14-54)

>>>>>[Is that a racist comment I just read?]<<<<<
—Big Tully (10:28:32/2-14-54)

>>>>>[No, you big slot. Run the figures. How long do elves live? Well, we don't know, but gene typing indicates that it's more than 100 years, right? What's 18 years to someone who'll still be going strong a century down the road? Now, how long do orks and trolls live? And what percentage of their lifespan is 18 years? See why it's more of an issue for those metatypes? No racism, just brutal and chilling logic]<<<<<
—Socio Pat (10.30:25/2-14-54)

>>>>>[Elves live 100 years? Hah!]<<<<<
—K-Bar (15:21:54/2-16-54)

>>>>>[So elves are long-lived, 100-plus years...And some of these elf "spike babies" could have been born before 2011...so...]<<<<<
—Bongo (09·13:42/3-12-54)

RITE OF PRONOUNCEMENT

Within three months following a child's birth, the law requires its parents to perform a public ceremony known as the Rite of Pronouncement. This rite announces the child's birth to the nation, and gives the child a name. Along with the ceremony, the family must file appropriate papers and such, but the Rite itself, especially the naming, carries great significance. Names have great value in the Tir.

A majority of elves have what the rest of society considers "non-traditional" names. A quick glance at the Council of Princes, where names like Ehran, Surehand, and Oakforest predominate (Sean Laverty being the exception), confirms this opinion. These men, and most of the elves in the Tir, are known not by the names they received at birth, but by names they chose.

For most of the nation, this self-naming takes place at the Rite of Passage, or age of majority (see below). For the founders of the Tir, however, this self-naming apparently occurred long before the Rite of Passage was instituted or even conceived. However, evidence suggests that the Council of Princes may have merely institutionalized something many elven (and other metahuman) children decided to do for themselves. Abandoned to the child welfare and social service systems, these Awakened children chose names for themselves that seemed to fit their changed bodies and lives, drawing on traditional and pop-cultural mythology for inspiration. In the Tir, the large number of elven children calling themselves "Legolas" or dwarven children taking the name "Thorin" eventually tapered away to the occasional romantic, but traditional mythological names continue to be popular. Names taken from Sperethiel nouns and descriptives are more common now, as subjects create names that mean "golden lady," "new morning," "fierce blood," and so on.

This explanation does not answer the question of why the Tir founders renamed themselves. Did they do it solely in order to create the Rites of Pronouncement and Passage? Or did something like those rites exist all along? Was it simply a convenient way to create a second identity, allowing the elves greater freedom in the modern world?

>>>>>[Whoa! Spes is starting to wander pretty far into conspiracy theory here. I think we need to go back and sort the real information from speculation.]<<<<<
—Jack Be Careful (04:13.30/03-15-54)

>>>>>[Well, if we accept the information in the political file as true, we know that Sean Laverty was using that name before 2011, which presumably makes him a spike baby. Ehran must have been one too, if he was Walter Bright Water (or vice-versa). If two of the original founding five were spike babies, it is a short leap to believe that *all five* may have been. If that's true, then all five deliberately concealed their elven nature prior to 2011. The question then becomes when (and how) they all became aware of each other and decided on this great plan for Tir Tairngire. And if all this planning took place before 2011, *how did they know UGE was coming?*]<<<<<
—Man of Many Questions (08:12·56/4-17-54)

RITE OF PASSAGE

A Tir elf's eighteenth birthday marks one of the most significant moments of his or her life, the transition between childhood and full membership in Tir Tairngire society.

>>>>>[Among Royal-rank families, the official Rite-of-Passage parties make most debutante "coming-out" balls look like cobbled-together shindigs at the local Stuffer Shack.]<<<<<
—Ballard (23:41:03/2-18-54)

>>>>>[And the unofficial after-parties will frizz your brains! Check out the empty bottles and dead brain cells lying on the floor the morning after. Hoo-hah!]<<<<<
—Raver (15 35.11/2-24-54)

Until Tir Tairngire resurrected it, the tradition of the Rite of Passage was limited to certain Amerindian tribes. The ritual is an optional part of gaining one's majority, but most elves—particularly those of higher social rank—believe that skipping the Rite lessens a person. Those who opted not to experience the Rite rarely admit it, at least not in polite company, though some iconoclasts display their refusal as a kind of badge of honor. A common rumor holds that the government records the names of those who decline to undergo the Rite, and uses that omission against them at their next Rite of Progression (see **Social Rank**, following).

>>>>>[That has to be bulldrek. The government couldn't possibly keep tabs on something that personal]<<<<<
—Slater (15:51:34/2-19-54)

>>>>>[Don't bet your life on it, *droog moi*.]<<<<<
—Reprobate (20:11:33/2-24-54)

The Rite of Passage breaks down into two parts, the Bridging and the Naming. The Bridging occurs on or soon after a Tîr elf's eighteenth birthday. The candidate's family takes him or her to an area of unspoiled wilderness, and leaves him there alone. Seventy-two hours later, the family returns to the same spot to pick up the successful candidate. The candidate undergoing the rite uses the intervening time to meditate on and contemplate the direction he or she wishes his life to take. From these meditations the candidate chooses the self-name that he or she will use for the remainder of his or her life. The Bridging requires the candidate to survive alone in the wilderness (usually the forests) for 72 hours using only the equipment and supplies the candidate can carry on his or her person

>>>>>[Like a big fat credstick and a portable phone for ordering pizza?]<<<<<
—Bung (22 46:07/3 5-54)

>>>>>[The occasional candidate approaches it this way. But the vast majority of the people who undergo the Rite take it very fragging seriously. Unless you know him or her intimately, don't joke about a person's Rite of Passage.]<<<<<
—Toni (15 03 56/3-7-54)

>>>>>[Sounds like a spirit quest.]<<<<<
—Eagle (16:42:04/3-9-54)

>>>>>[Without the drugs and lacking the spiritual component, yes.]<<<<<
—People Watcher (23:32:11/3-9-3)

>>>>>[Do not discount the spiritual element. It exists as part of the Rite, but is so intensely personal that it cannot be discussed in public lest its worth be cheapened.]<<<<<
—Spes (15:51:34/3-10-54)

Families always provide a way for the candidate to ask for help in an emergency, but, as a matter of pride, the participant usually "toughs things out" rather than calling for rescue. Each year a handful of participants in the Rite die or suffer injuries—usually from encounters with paranimals, though sheer stupidity also takes its toll—but no one seriously suggests outlawing the Rite.

After successfully completing the Bridging, the participant then performs a ceremony called the Naming.

During the Naming, the candidate stands in front of his family, friends, and other chosen guests, and recites a long, complex speech in Sperethiel, the elven tongue of Tîr Tairngire. In essence, the Naming speech consists of a standard text accepting the responsibilities of an adult Tîr Tairngire subject, swearing an oath of allegiance to the land and the High Prince, and officially thanking the parents for guarding and guiding the candidate through childhood.

>>>>>[Sounds unspeakably sappy.]<<<<<
—Miniato (16:12.04/2-19-54)

>>>>>[Mention your opinion of this ceremony to a big, strapping Israeli commando. Compare it to his bar mitzvah (there's a direct correlation). But talk fast, before he pounds you into a grease spot.]<<<<<
—Ben (21:11:41/2-21-54)

>>>>>[What's with this Sperethiel drek, anyway? Is it the national language of Tir Tairngire, or what? And if it is, why do only certain people seem to understand it?]<<<<<
—Phillip D (14:55:08/2-28-54)

>>>>>[The language of Sperethiel represents our racial heritage.]<<<<<
—Ariadne (20:02:31/2-29-54)

>>>>>[All twenty-some years of it, oh yeah. Guess it doesn't matter that only one elf in a roomful can actually speak this "traditional" jabber, too...]<<<<<
—Darnell (19.04:14/3-4-54)

>>>>>[It's not surprising few people speak or understand it. It stands as perhaps the most complex language on earth, using multiple protocol modes (rising and falling), levels of emotional subtlety far beyond any other language, *plus* very efficient information transfer. What you can say in a short phrase of Sperethiel would take several complex sentences in English.]<<<<<
—Noam (22:04:20/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Do you sling the lingo, Noam?]<<<<<
—Dinsdale (23:34:46/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Myself, no. Fortunately, you don't have to be able to speak a tongue to study its structure.]<<<<<
—Noam (23:00:11/3-7-54)

>>>>>[I disagree, but let's take this argument off-line. Or continue it later in the Language section. Agreed?]<<<<<
—Bowers (23:44.53/3-7-54)

Following the required pronouncements and readings, the elf reaches the heart of the rite, the moment of self-naming. That element, though the most critical, takes place with the most simplicity. In Sperethiel, the candidate greets everyone present and his or her fellow elves and countrymen in general, introducing him or herself using the chosen new name.

Officially and legally, from that point on, the individual known by the name given at the Rite of Pronouncement no longer exists. The elf who finishes the Rite of Passage enters elven society as a new individual. Past sins and crimes are forgiven and the new individual begins life with a clean slate. Though the law requires the Tir government to purge any files or records (other than genealogical) attached to the given name, that rarely happens.

Traditionally, all elf subjects perform the Rite of Passage immediately after reaching age eighteen. However, many subjects of the Tir not born there, or who came to the nation at an age older than eighteen, perform the ceremony because it makes them feel more a part of their new culture. Few sights in the world have the power to move the witness like the sight of an older elf, new to the Land of Promise, reciting the Naming with tears in his or her eyes.

>>>>>[Make me yarf...]<<<<<
—Slug-Boy (16.32.53/2-28-54)

Members of the Royal social rank frequently invite members of the Council of Princes to their Naming. Regardless of whether or not any Council member accepts the invitation, the participant gains status simply by offering it, thereby confirming to the Council that he or she performed the Rite of Passage and considers him- or herself a true subject of Tir Tairngire.

>>>>>[What about other metatypes?]<<<<<
—DJ (15:28:55/3-4-54)

>>>>>[I guess DJ stands for Dumb Jerk. The Rite of Passage is strictly elven. I know a human who announced his intention to perform both ceremonies of the Passage—a proud gesture, and I admire him for it. When he went into the woods for his Bridging, a group of elven youths beat him within an inch of his life.]<<<<<
—Mary J (22:15:31/3-5-54)

>>>>>[I am aware of the incident. Those youths belong to Ehran's paladins, and the beating took place with Ehran's tacit approval]<<<<<
—Spes (20:54:12/3-7-54)

>>>>>[Who does this fragging Ehran think he is? The guardian of ideological purity or some such drek?]<<<<<
—Norman (14:35:40/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Yes.]<<<<<
—Spes (22:04:22/3-8-54)

SOCIAL RANK

The stratified society of the Tir maintains a stricter distinction of "caste" than any other nation in the world. Social rank determines many advantages and disadvantages of daily life: access to certain classes of housing and services, taxation level, schooling, entry into certain careers, ability to travel outside the Tir, and so on.

>>>>>[Spes *isn't* exaggerating here. Certain "neighborhoods"—like Royal Hill outside Portland—don't even allow low-caste subjects to pass through their streets. Higher ranks pay lower taxes—supposedly because they contribute to the nation in other ways—and don't have to jump through so many bureaucratic hoops if they want to travel out of the country. Some schools and universities won't let applicants register—or even visit the campus—unless they can prove they belong to a high enough caste. This social restriction permeates just about every aspect of life.]<<<<<
—Jojo (12:03:18/2-18-54)

>>>>>[And if you're born into a particular caste you're stuck there for life? Sounds like England to me...]<<<<<
—Duff (17:04:58/2-19-54)

>>>>>[Actually, no. You can change ranks. See below.]<<<<<
—Jojo (12:01:32/2-20-54)

Tir society recognizes six social ranks (seven if one includes the Council Princes)

GENTRY

Gentry is the lowest rank, comprising the vast majority of ordinary subjects. Both male and female Gentry are formally addressed as Squire. Gentry pay the highest taxes, and suffer the most restrictions. Youths of the Gentry must serve one year in the Peace Force, enlisting immediately after their Rite of Passage (or their eighteenth birthday, if they decline to perform the Rite).

>>>>>[The government accepts many reasons for deferred service: employment in a nationally sensitive industry, poor health, dependents, and so on. It's also perfectly legal to buy a deferment. Expect to pay about 22,000¥. If you don't receive a deferment and you fail to enlist in a timely manner, expect to spend at least three years as a guest of the government.]<<<<<

—Lacey (10:51:12/3-2-54)

CHIVALRY

The number of subjects named members of the Chivalry class equals approximately one fifth of the number of Gentry. The Chivalry are officially addressed as Sir or Demoiselle.

>>>>>[Hold on. Do people actually *use* these la-di-da titles? Or do they just sign letters that way to impress dullards?]<<<<<

—Nuke (13:12:17/2-19-54)

>>>>>[It is nearly always appropriate to use these titles. Referring to someone at a lower rank than they actually are is highly insulting, and a speaker who assigns too high a rank marks himself as ignorant. People take care to determine the social rank of those they meet. Fortunately, the task is made easier by the fact that members of different social ranks wear distinctly different styles of clothes.]<<<<<

—Mondo Angeles (21:14:31/2-21-54)

Youths of the Chivalry rank must also serve in the Peace Force. However, the Force inducts these men and women as noncommissioned or commissioned officers, while members of the Gentry enter as privates. Strictly speaking, subjects below Chivalry rank cannot own horses (hence the name).

>>>>>[So what?]<<<<<

—Nadya (20:51:43/2-27-54)

>>>>>[Rank hath its privileges—even if they're meaningless.]<<<<<

—D'Artagnan (13:24:31/3-1-54)

NOBLES

Other ranks address Nobles as Lord or Lady. Noble is the first rank at which subjects of the Tir may own land. The Gentry and Chivalry classes may *lease* land, but may own only the buildings constructed on the land.

>>>>>[This is worth mentioning. More people in the Tir own their homes or living quarters than in Seattle, where renting is the way to go. For most of the lower ranks, owning their homes means a title arrangement for their apartment.]<<<<<

—Martin (10:18:13/2-19-54)

Nobles may not, however, own revenue-producing land—for example, apartment buildings and so on. That privilege belongs to higher social rankings. Youths of Noble rank must serve one year with the Peace Force, which inducts them as junior officers. Youths of this rank receive deferments almost as a matter of course; only those youths who want to enlist ever do so.

COMITAL RANK

Formally addressed as Count or Countess, members of the Comital rank own the vast majority of revenue-producing (rental) property in the nation. By strict reading of the law, subjects of this rank or higher have the right to an audience with the Council of Princes on request. In practice, however, a Count or Countess requesting such an audience usually waits several months for an opening in the Council's "busy schedule."

>>>>>[Unless the Count or Countess can throw some weight around—knows where the bodies are buried, owns the negatives, has the back-up; you know the drill.]<<<<<

—Cato (10:29:31/3-4-54)

Tir law requires all youths of Comital rank to serve time in the Peace Force. In practice, this law is rarely enforced.

>>>>>[Not to say some young Counts and Countesses don't volunteer for service, particularly those further down the birth order or those who want to make their mark on the Tir some way other than through rank advancement. These young men and women remain a rare breed, but they do exist.]<<<<<

—Raffi (03:10:45/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Most of the slags at this rank and higher spend too much time playing the political game to worry about anything else. They're backing and filling, plotting machinations and betrayals, and trying to climb to higher rank...preferably on the backs of their rivals.]<<<<<

—Mack (23:13:16/3-2-54)

DUCAL RANK

Tir subjects address those of Ducal rank as Duke or Duchess. Anyone with the slightest ambition covets Ducal rank for the land grant that comes with the title. By law, anyone of Ducal rank receives at least twenty hectares of land on achieving the rank, or upon reaching the age of majority. An individual who loses this rank through failure in the Rite of Progression or as a result of legal discipline immediately forfeits ownership of the land, and of any buildings constructed on it.

>>>>>[If you've put a lot of money into buildings on your Ducal lands, the ante goes up when you decide to challenge the Rite of Progression and try for Royal rank. If you hose up big-time, you lose your land and any investment you made in it.]<<<<<

—Slade (10:57:22/2-28-54)

>>>>>[There are probably only a couple of hundred elves of Ducal rank in the Tir, but all the good tracts of land have already been deeded away. New Dukes and Duchesses are likely to become the

proud owners of a chunk of forested mountainside hundreds of klicks away from the nearest city.]<<<<<
—Latervia (15:53:56/3-4-54)

Ducal social rank exempts its youths from mandatory service in the Peace Force, and few volunteer to serve. At Ducal rank and above, Tir subjects have the right to travel abroad unrestricted by bureaucracy. A Duke or Duchess also has the legal right to demand an audience with either the Council of Princes or the High Prince, and the Council usually grants such requests within a reasonable length of time. The High Prince rarely grants a mere Duke or Duchess an audience unless it would benefit him personally; to avoid the embarrassment of having their requests denied, few members of the Ducal rank ask to meet with the High Prince.

ROYAL RANK

The highest official social rank, Royal subjects are addressed as Prince or Princess. (As discussed earlier, this can lead to some confusion, as members of Royal rank do not automatically receive seats on the Council of Princes.) On ascension to Royal rank, a subject receives complete dominion of at least 200 hectares of land, a grant in addition to any land the individual received for holding Ducal rank.

Royal rank entitles the holder to own land on Royal Hill just outside Portland.

>>>>>[If any is up for sale. As with the property accorded to those of Ducal rank, most of the good land has already been given away. New Princes are likely to find their 200 hectares damn near vertical on the face of Mount Hood, or somewhere equally inconvenient.]<<<<<
—Latervia (15:55:00/3-4-54)

Along with the grant of land, subjects of Royal social rank receive an annual stipend, intended to defray some of the costs of maintaining their lands. This stipend is paid in gold each year on the High Prince's birthday. The amount of the stipend depends on the value of the granted land, but averages around 44,000 nuyen per year.

>>>>>[Sure pays to be a prince, don't it? Free land, cash, and the lowest tax rates in the fragging nation. The rich just keep on getting richer...]<<<<<
—Zane (11:18:42/3-3-54)

Subjects of Royal rank can demand, and expect to receive, timely audiences with the Council of Princes and the High Prince.

The government of the Tir claims that the only criterion for Royal rank is performance in the Rite of Progression, the testing process used to assign social rank. Not surprisingly, the facts differ from stated policy. No matter how well candidates perform in the Rite of Progression, they will not receive Royal rank unless they already enjoy great wealth or prominence in business or civic matters.

>>>>>[Okay, big question here. What's the breakdown of social rank by metatype? In other words, if you ain't elf, how high can you expect to climb?]<<<<<
—Sarah (22:33:11/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Statistics place 95 percent of non-elves among the gentry Not surprising, right? Some dwarves and humans hold Noble rank, but no trolls or orks have made it higher than the Chivalry. There's obviously a strong bias of some kind against non-elf metatypes in the Rite of Progression.]<<<<<
—Tig (11:23:46/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Then how do you explain the fact that other metatypes sit on the Council?]<<<<<
—Ariadne (19:36:43/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Political window-dressing, my dear Ariadne. They got named to the Council just to shut up the non-elves ("See? You *are* represented on the Council.").]<<<<<
—Natty (11:28:54/3-23-54)

>>>>>[We hear frequent accusations of bias in the Rite of Progression, always leveled by those who seek to destabilize our society, or who are jealous of our successes. I will repeat the statement I have made many times before the Council of Princes: There is no bias in the Rite. The Rite of Progression reflects ability, strength of character, and intrinsic worth. Metatype is as irrelevant to the results as is ethnic stock or national background.]<<<<<
—James Brennan, Proctor of the Rite (20:46:42/3-24-54)

>>>>>[That's it, Brennan, stick to the big lie.]<<<<<
—Moss (23:49:52/3-25-54)

>>>>>[There's one more social class that Spes hasn't mentioned: the *"Irenis,"* or "casteless." This group is small, but socially significant. These subjects of the Tir refuse to play the social-rank game They

don't use the proper forms of address, they don't wear the right styles, they don't take the tests—they consider the whole set-up ludicrous. The government classifies most *Irenis* as Gentry, though some hold higher rank by birth. Remember, as far as the government's concerned everyone holds some rank—for figuring taxes if for nothing else. Not surprisingly, the government does not acknowledge the existence of the *Irenis*.]<<<<<

—Lady Macbeth (19:47:13/3-27-54)

ROYAL LIFE

Members of the Tir Royal social rank apparently live the same kind of life as that enjoyed by British nobles several centuries ago. They pursue no gainful employment, seemingly content to live in sybaritic luxury on their large estates. Many people outside the Tir consider their lifestyle parasitic and believe they simply live on the taxes of the poorer subjects.

>>>>>[They *are* parasites, chummer]<<<<<

—Bog (10:09:06/2-19-54)

The reality is far different. While members of the Royal rank do receive an annual stipend, most of this goes to fulfill the obligations associated with the rank itself: maintaining the land they received, hosting extravagant social functions for the High Prince and the Council, and so on. Certainly no one can argue that 44,000 nuyen—the average annual Royal stipend—could completely pay for the kind of lifestyle those of Royal rank enjoy. Where does the money come from?

The answer is simply that nearly all Royals possessed enormous wealth *before* they achieved their high rank. These people hold major shares in profitable corporations; they own huge tracts of productive land; they own rental properties. As a point of interest, the stipend usually fails to cover all the responsibilities accompanying Royal rank. Investment and other income cover day-to-day living expenses, luxuries and frivolities, and the stipend's shortfall.

>>>>>[Okay, so you're saying they're already parasites before they get elevated to their exalted fragging rank, right? So what? A parasite's a fragging parasite, you slot.]<<<<<

—Bog (10:11:12/2-19-54)

Those of Royal social rank form a closed society, fraternizing almost exclusively with other Royals. They regularly throw extravagant house parties and balls. Though they do not indulge in organized "coming-out" balls or support a debutante "circuit" as do the nobles of Great Britain, the less-structured schedule of balls throughout the year in Royal society serves much the same purpose. Royal youths of marriageable age meet prospective partners of equivalent rank at these balls, and though Tir society frowns on "arranged marriages," in practice they occur frequently. Families arrange matches between their children in order to conserve and augment family wealth and influence.

>>>>>[Ah—so we're looking at the same kind of inbreeding that slotted up Britain and Europe a couple of centuries back. Get ready for an upswing in hemophilia and other congenital disorders among the Royals. (Maybe they'll kill themselves off...)]<<<<<

—Barker (21:10:13/3-1-54)

>>>>>[Sorry to burst your bubble, Barker, but the Royals aren't fragging stupid. Strict laws forbid consanguineous marriages that haven't been approved by the Genetic Screening Board. A rational way of doing things, of course. Smart couples go for genetic screening even if they aren't related. Depending on the gene chart in question, the Board will sometimes red-flag a union between unrelated people while giving the go-ahead to a marriage between first cousins. I think we should take a harder look at doing this in Seattle.]<<<<<

—Bluegenes (23:34:23/3-3-54)

>>>>>[Who's going to pay for it? Don't go raising *my* taxes—again.]<<<<<

—Lance (20:10:03/3-4-54)

>>>>>[That's the real problem...]<<<<<

—Bluegenes (00:18:21/3-5-54)

While some Royal families still mount elaborate annual hunts through the forests of the Tir, this particular form of recreation continues to lose popularity.

>>>>>[Not because of any "green" sentiment, you can bet. It's just common sense. The point of the hunts was to go off on foot or on horseback, armed with "low-tech" crap like bows, crossbows, or spears, and slaughter some poor, dumb critter, like a deer. In the last couple of years, five Royal hunting groups found *themselves* facing a few low-tech weapons—teeth, claws, acid, that sort of thing. Instead of a deer, they found themselves facing a ticked-off plasma or something worse. Most of the Royal families found precious little fun in hunting and killing something that could return the favor, and gave it up.]<<<<<

—Portland Belle (02:10:32/3-2-54)

INHERITED RANK

The surest way to gain a rank is by inheriting it, though a few rules apply in these cases, too. Spouses automatically share the same rank only at Royal and Ducal rank. (In other words, if an individual attains Ducal or Royal rank, his or her spouse gains the same rank automatically.) At all lower ranks, spouses may hold different social ranks.

>>>>>[Note to all you gold diggers out there (male or female): you *can't* marry into a higher social rank. True, if you're already married and your spouse makes it to Ducal or Royal rank, you also get the benefits. But if your spouse already holds Ducal or Royal rank when you marry him or her, you retain your own social rank.]<<<<<

—Abby (11:46:33/3-7-54)

Children automatically receive the same social rank as their same-sex parent. In other words, sons gain their fathers' rank, while daughters gain their mothers' rank. On attaining the age of majority, a child must undergo the Rite of Progression to confirm

his or her inherited rank. If he or she refuses to undergo the next scheduled Rite, the government automatically "demotes" that person to the Gentry and strips them of all privileges associated with higher rank.

RITE OF PROGRESSION

The Rite of Progression is the testing process that determines the social rank of subjects of the Tir. Tir society expects each subject to undergo at least one Rite, either when they reach the age of majority or when they immigrate to the nation.

The Rite of Progression takes place every seven years, on or around May 1, under the auspices of the Proctor of the Rite. (The position of Proctor is largely ceremonial, granted by the Council of Princes, usually as a form of patronage. James Brennan currently serves as Proctor.)

May 1, 2036 marked the occasion of the first Rite. The most recent Rite took place in 2050, and the next is scheduled in four years, in 2057.

>>>>>[Once every seven years? That's a long time to wait, isn't it?]<<<<<
—Dido (11:55 23/2-21-54)

>>>>>[Elves, chummer. It's elves.]<<<<<
—Markie (21:45:58/2-24-54)

The Rite of Progression is divided into two parts: bureaucratic testing similar to that practiced in ancient China, and physical events similar to the Fenian games. Lobbying also has a major influence on the results.

BUREAUCRATIC TESTING

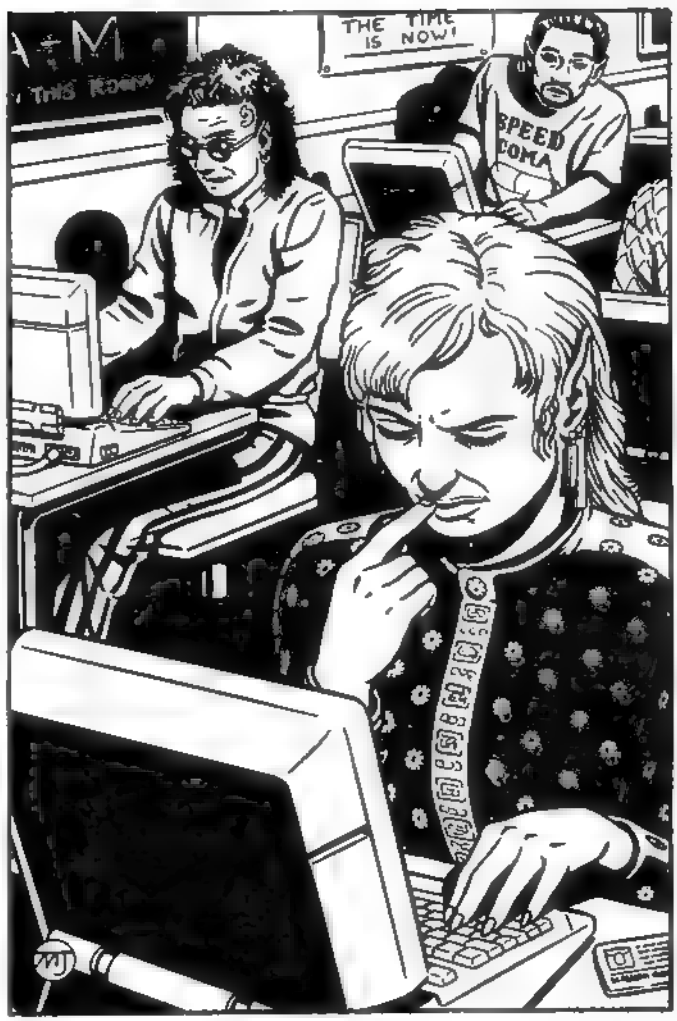
A candidate in the Rite of Progression must pass a bureaucratic standard in the form of a battery of academic-style tests, conducted one-on-one with a testing computer. Scheduled over two or three days, the tests include history of the Tir, general knowledge of the Tir, mathematical aptitude, and logic and reasoning skills. Additional tests gauge the candidate's overall personality make-up and IQ.

>>>>>[Sounds like scholastic testing for university entrance: SAT, LSAT, GMAT, MCAT...]<<<<<
—Professional Student (01:12:39/2-28-54)

>>>>>[A good analogy.]<<<<<
—Spes (20:05:31/2-28-54)

The results of these tests are confidential. Though candidates receive their overall grade, they never see exactly what they got right and wrong, or precisely how the overall grade was calculated.

>>>>>[Which makes it easy for the people controlling the test to skew it any way they like.]<<<<<
—Professional Student (01:16:03/2-28-54)



>>>>>[Exactly.]<<<<<
—Spes (20:06:53/2-28-54)

The computer system of the Bureau of Standards manages the testing and records the results.

PHYSICAL TESTING

The founders of Tir Tairngire stated in the nation's charter their belief that only a combination of physical and mental fitness can bring success in today's world. The bureaucratic testing gauges mental fitness; "the Games" gauge physical fitness.

The physical testing in the Rite of Progression, known as "the Games," comprises seven events, of which a candidate must choose four. The seven events are sprint and cross-country footracing, wrestling, javelin, hammer-throwing, swimming, and acrobatics/tumbling. The Proctor of the Rite and his staff assign each candidate to three individual events, chosen from the candidate's four selections.

Participants in the sprinting events run a series of heats in various race lengths, ranging from 100 meters to 250 meters. The cross-country course stretches over an arduous 15-kilometer route that follows established roads and paths for only a fraction of its length. The wrestling events use a formal style reminiscent

of Greco-Roman wrestling. As traditional field sports, the javelin and hammer events take place in much the same way as the corresponding Olympic events. Swimmers compete in multiple heats of various lengths, ranging from 50 meters to 200 meters. The acrobatics/tumbling event requires a three-minute unstructured floor program.

The Proctor's staff matches candidates with appropriate opponents. For example, cyberware-enhanced candidates compete only against opponents with comparable modifications. Cyberlimbs with offensive capabilities (spurs, implanted guns, and so on) must be disabled before competition begins.

The Proctor of the Rite and members of his staff judge the events. While candidates always compete to win, the level of effort and participation count just as much. As with the bureaucratic testing, candidates learn their overall score at the end of the Games, but never find out exactly how the judges arrived at that score.

>>>>>[This is totally irrational. Grown men playing stupid little games to figure out what their social rank should be? Sounds like a big ol' cluster-frag to me.]<<<<<
—Bingo (11:18:06/3-4-54)

>>>>>[How would you do it, Bingo? Depend totally on bloodline? Toss a coin? Scrap it out, winner-take-all, in an alley?

Granted, the Tir's system seems a little strange. But let me tell you, the Rite of Progression is *one big party*. It's like the Olympics, but more personal. Most spectators know or are related to at least one of the candidates, so emotions run really high. And events like wrestling really get people's karma in a twist.]<<<<<
—Karyn (13:20:49/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Jeez, talk about bread-and-circuses...]<<<<<
—Donatello (21:18:21/3-7-54)

>>>>>[That's right.]<<<<<
—People Watcher (23:43:13/3-7-54)

>>>>>[All the events are run "clean"—no corruption, no interference—except for the cross-country. At the last Games, in 2050, a candidate undergoing the Rite for Royal rank died in a "tragic accident" on the cross-country course. (Not) quite by coincidence, a major personal rival also in the race ended up making Ducal rank and was granted the dead man's lands. The Proctor's investigation into the affair was the purest whitewash.]<<<<<
—Lonnie (21:32:19/3-9-54)

LOBBYING

Friends and family of a candidate may lobby the office of the Proctor—in fact, are expected to do so—requesting that the Proctor give the candidate the social rank he wants. Lobbying must be done in person; representatives of the candidate must visit the Proctor's office personally and speak to a member of the Proctor's staff. The Proctor occasionally meets lobbyists personally, at his discretion. Representatives may lobby for a given candidate beginning twelve months before the Rite, up until three months before. No one may lobby during the final three months.

Representatives can gain status and otherwise benefit the candidate by persuading influential members of Tir society to lobby for a candidate. In particular, families of Royal rank whose offspring are participating in the Rite to ratify their inherited rank often persuade members of the Council—or even the High Prince—to lobby for their candidates.

The number and identity of lobbyists, who they lobby for, and what they say, never leaves the Proctor's office. No one outside the Proctor's staff ever learns how a lobbying campaign affected a candidate's result.

>>>>>[Thus giving the Proctor, and through him, the government, the ultimate "fudge factor" to manipulate the results of the Rite.]<<<<<
—Darkmane (11:14:43/3-10-54)

RESULTS

Two weeks after all candidates have completed the Rite, the Proctor's office publishes the results. Each candidate may remain at the same social rank, advance to a higher rank, or be demoted to a lower one. If a candidate changes rank, the resulting change in privileges—including stipend, land grants and so on—takes effect immediately. The Rite of Progression provides no way to challenge the results: all results announced by the office of the Proctor are binding. If a participant disagrees with the result, he has no option but to participate again in the next Rite and hope for a better result.

>>>>>[The whole Rite system stinks of corruption like a 3¥ bill. No matter what the Proctor's office says, even a blind pig can see that the results are totally arbitrary. There's no provision for audits, check-ups or oversight of any kind. Boycott the Rite!]<<<<<
—Sam (13 39:44/3-9-54)

>>>>>[I echo the sentiment. I held Royal rank, but was not on the Council, and openly opposed various policies promulgated by the High Prince. My son reached his age of majority in 2049, and took part in the 2050 Rite of Progression.

Before the Rite began, I received cryptic communications from the High Prince, hinting that unless I stilled my criticisms my son would suffer. I refused to bow to such blatant threats.

Needless to say, my son performed admirably in all areas of the Rite, and the lobbying campaign I organized to support him was surely the most extensive that year. The results released demoted my son to the Gentry, much to his shame and that of our family.

The Rite, and the entire social rank structure, is nothing but a tool—nay, a weapon—allowing the High Prince and the Council to force their will on the populace. They created it, and now they wield it, with no concern for anything but their own personal interests]<<<<<
—Leif Highmount (19:30:38/3-12-54)

>>>>>[Prince Highmount seeks to shift the blame for his son's failure to the Council, when that failure obviously should be attributed to poor upbringing and perhaps a weak bloodline.]<<<<<
—James Brennan (09 15:41/3-17-54)

>>>>>[Hold on here, jokers. What's this official Tir guy doing here? Don't think I like that much...]<<<<<
—Zybart (23:42:34/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Equal access, that's our motto.]<<<<<
—Captain Chaos (02:24:31/3-20-54)

CHALLENGING THE RITE

Candidates come to the Rite of Progression one of three ways. Most participants in the Rite are youths who recently reached their age of majority, seeking to ratify the social rank they inherited from their parents.

>>>>>[The results of the Rite give the vast majority of these candidates the social rank they inherited. Enough are demoted however, to prove that the Rite isn't just a rubber-stamp formality.]<<<<<
—Dancer (12:09:07/2-24-54)

The second largest group to participate in the Rite is recent immigrants to the Tir. People who immigrate to the nation receive the status of "probationary subjects," and possess the privileges of the Gentry. Immigrants must participate in the first Rite of Progression scheduled after their arrival, at which time they may receive another social rank.

>>>>>[About the only thing you don't get as a "probationary subject" that you get on the full-meal deal is the right to vote for your representative in the Star Chamber. Considering the actual irrelevance of that body, you're not losing anything but a source of pride by staying probationary.]<<<<<
—Maxine (21:32:16/3-19-54)

The third group of people participating in the Rite of Progression are those candidates "challenging the Rite," attempting to rise in social rank through outstanding performance. Challenging the Rite poses a risk for any candidate of Chivalry rank or higher, because the challenger may be demoted. A challenger unhappy with the results of the Rite cannot appeal the Proctor's decision; he or she must wait seven years and challenge the Rite again.

>>>>>[I can't believe how boneheaded this is.]<<<<<
—Bingo (11:26 32/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Not boneheaded at all. It's a perfect form of bread-and-circuses, that time-honored tradition begun by Imperial Rome. give the people something to take their mind off the nation's problems. Plus, if Surehand and the Council wanted to do something to set the Tir apart from any other nation on earth—to give it some glamour—they've certainly managed it.]<<<<<
—Neery (17:54:38/3-7-54)

>>>>>[I'm surprised Spes didn't mention one other part of the Rite: I've heard the same rumor from so many places I'm starting to believe it. A subject of Ducal rank challenging the Rite—in other words, gunning for Royal rank—gets a personal interview with the Council of Princes...and two Royal-rank mages. The mages probe the candidate's mind during the interview, dig around in his thoughts and memories and turn up any deep darks he may have hidden away.

If this rumor's true, you can bet that Dukes are *very* careful about challenging the Rite. They'll only do it if they've got nothing to hide, or if they can screen their minds so well that the mages can't get through (and can't tell the screen's in place).]<<<<<
—Vander Zalm (22:03:42/3-10-54)

>>>>>[I have heard the same rumors, but I do not know how much credit they deserve. Since I, personally, did not hold Ducal rank, I cannot speak from personal experience.]<<<<<
—Spes (20:18:43/3-11-54)

>>>>>[The rumor is not true]<<<<<
—Aegis (12:52:04/3-16-54)

HIGH PRINCE FIAT

The High Prince has the right to circumvent the normal ranking system and the Rite of Progression to promote people in rank. He cannot use his office's fiat to demote a subject, and must account to the Council of Princes for any decision to raise a subject's social rank. The Council may object to a fiat by veto and/or a vote of no-confidence.

Each year on the Royal Birthday, the High Prince traditionally

promotes perhaps a dozen subjects to a higher social rank. Though the High Prince sometimes promotes subjects out of pure patronage, most promotions reward a subject's meritorious conduct, an outstanding achievement, or service to the nation.

CERTIFICATION AND TESTING

It comes as no surprise that a nation that uses institutionalized testing to assign social rank also uses testing in other facets of life. Workers in various high-skill careers and employees of industries the government considers politically sensitive undergo regular testing and certification, usually once every three years. The Bureau of Standards, a quasi governmental organization based in Salem at Willamette University, presides over this process.

>>>>>[The Bureau of Standards also handles the bureaucratic testing part of the Rite of Progression.]<<<<<
—Tallyrand (12:08:10/3-6-54)

Workers applying for a job that requires certification must approach the Bureau of Standards and arrange their own testing. Once a worker begins his career, testing takes place at least every three years. The employee or his employers may arrange for more frequent testing, if appropriate. The results of this certification help to determine promotions, levels of responsibility, and compensation schemes.

The results of certification break down into quality ranks that parallel the social ranks. The lowest ranking is Gentry, the highest is Royal. One might refer to someone as a Royal-rank computer programmer, a Noble-rank sorcerer, a Ducal-rank transimplant specialist, and so on.

>>>>>[Bravo! At last, something about the Tir I agree with! Tie advancement, responsibility, and salary to *competence*, not just seniority and time served. How about a system like this in Seattle?]<<<<<
—Blaise (22:04:32/2-10-54)

>>>>>[Elitist rakker. How would *you* like it if some snot-nose kid right out of school cruised in as your boss after you'd been working in a place for five years? What price experience?]<<<<<
—TUC (00:14:43/2-11-54)

>>>>>[Well, if the kid is actually better suited to the job than I am, I hope I'd give him my support. But don't yammer on about experience, okay? Universal testing is the only way to tell if somebody's had five years of experience, or one year five times. That's not elitist, that's just common sense.]<<<<<
—Blaise (21:45:06/2-11-54)

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

The Tir adds glamour to its international image another way by borrowing a tradition from British society: providing public celebrations of national days of importance. The Tir loves ceremonial "events of state," most of which the national newsnet broadcasts in their entirety.

>>>>>[...Preempting what's *really* important—*hurling!* Go Marchers!!]<<<<<
—Fenian Fan (16:25:15/3-22-54)

The most important of these events are:
February 23: Royal Birthday (High Prince's birthday observed)
May 1: Secession Day (or Day of Freedom)
June 21: Midsummer
September 1: Convocation of the Star Chamber
December 21: Hearthfire

Each of these events involves some pomp and circumstance, the minimum being an appearance by the High Prince wearing his robes of state and surrounded by his Paladins. Other members of the Royal social rank usually participate, if only to bring themselves to the attention of the High Prince and the Council.

>>>>>[Secession Day's the big one. Last year, the Tir pulled out all the stops. Along with the usual ceremonial drek, they sent a big parade through Portland, led by crack detachments from the Peace Force. Tanks, missile vehicles, troops, warplane flybys—the whole nine yards, as they used to say. Made me think I was in the Soviet Union on May Day.]<<<<<
—Nena (17:37:39/2-28-54)

>>>>>[Parades like that make good military sense. They cost less nuyen than a good old-fashioned border skirmish, and are almost as effective at reminding any would-be enemies that you're armed to the teeth.]<<<<<
—Jane (09:31:56/3-2-54)

>>>>>[I'll second that. Remember current events around that time? The Tir was renegotiating the trade deal with CalFree, and the hotheads in Sacto were rattling their sabers (Remember Redding!—what phlegm). The volume of the rattling dropped drastically after the Tir's little parade. Gunboat diplomacy via trideo...]<<<<<
—The Big Eye (04:41:23/3-5-54)

>>>>>[On most ceremonial days, it's business as usual everywhere but the Royal Hill. Secession Day's a different story. Everything shuts down. Don't expect to get *any* business done. Even shadow channels tend to take the day off.]<<<<<
—Whacker (18.57:32/3-8-54)

LANGUAGE

Tir Tairngire takes an irrational approach to language. The official language of the nation is Sperethiel, the elven tongue. However, because those who can speak or understand the language are largely limited to the Comital rank or higher, English remains the common language of business and social interaction. Only the most prestigious schools, those open to families of privilege, teach Sperethiel. Many chip and electronic training programs exist for Sperethiel, but the language is so difficult that few of these are of any real worth. The lower social ranks consider knowing a bare minimum of Sperethiel, primarily common greetings and partings, quite chic.

A Tir subject must speak Sperethiel for the Naming, and an understanding of the language becomes useful on certain ceremonial occasions when the High Prince makes a short traditional address in the language. Some people claim that the High Prince has only a rudimentary understanding of the language and learns his speeches phonetically, as do most participants in the Naming. I know for a fact that the High Prince speaks Sperethiel fluently.

>>>>>[Do you speak Sperethiel, Spes?]<<<<<
—Bowers (03:17:15/3-1-54)

>>>>>[I get by.]<<<<<
—Spes (19 48:43/3-1-54)

>>>>>[The entire Council, with the exception of the non-elves (who use simultaneous translators) speak Sperethiel. The High Prince does as well. In fact, only Sperethiel may be used in private session.]<<<<<
—Aegis (08:18:42/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Okay, here's a major question for anybody who can answer it. *Where does Sperethiel come from?* It most certainly is not derived from—or related to—any other language on earth. So what is it exactly?]<<<<<
—Bowers (22:15·17/3-8-54)

>>>>>[It is the traditional elven tongue.]<<<<<
—Ariadne (22:17:48/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Yeah, yeah, you said that earlier in the file. But, as someone else pointed out, the first elves appeared in 2011. (Yes, I know about spike babies But I can't see isolated children creating their own language.) Forty-two years does not count as a tradition—more like a protracted fad. So I repeat my question.]<<<<<
—Bowers (22·25 26/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Couldn't the founders of Tir Tairngire have made it up out of whole cloth, either before or after they seceded? It may be a completely artificial language, like Esperanto.]<<<<<
—Noam (22:26:38/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Okay, I accept that as a possibility, but not a very likely one. Esperanto's designers created it as an "ideal" language, with a logical construction that made it easy to learn. Sperethiel is the exact opposite, isn't it? It's the most complex language in existence. Why build something like that from scratch? The putative "designer" would have to recognize that only a handful of people could ever learn it, and most of those wouldn't even bother.]<<<<<
—Bowers (22.29.03/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Maybe the designer made it that complex intentionally, to serve as a self-selecting membership identifier for an exclusive club. Maybe what he or she had in mind was a kind of elven Freemasonry. If you can learn the language, you deserve to be a member.]<<<<<
—Noam (22:30·24/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Again, I'll grant that possibility. But do you really believe it? Look at the staggering complexity of the language, and think about how much effort somebody put into the design. Remember, the language works; the rules and protocol modes work It's like...like opening the hood of a new car and discovering that the engine includes a Rubik's cube, a kitchen sink, three food processors, two simsense players, a microsurgery unit, and a Waring blender. And then finding out that it not only works, but it gives you 1,000 klicks per liter of fuel]<<<<<
—Bowers (22·33·48/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Bowers, I agree that most of the arguments proposed so far seem unlikely, but there's another factor to consider. According to the results of a series of analyses and transforms I've devised, Sperethiel cannot be a recent language. It shows undeniable signs of linguistic drift—the kind seen only in very old and mature languages. The second-order transforms prove that Sperethiel is actually a degraded form of something even *more* complex. Contact me off-line and I'll transfer my formulae and analysis paradigms; you can replicate my results yourself.]<<<<<
—Aiden (11:21:02/3-11-54)

>>>>>[Sorry, Professor Aiden. Your transforms and analyses are elegant and definitely new...but I can't say I believe the results actually *mean* anything. Certainly, I reproduced your analysis of Sperethiel and came up with the same results. But then, just to test your paradigms, I ran the same analysis on pig Latin. According to your metric, pig Latin is an older and more mature language than Indo-European. I'm afraid that casts doubt on your conclusion.]<<<<<
—Prof. Erin Callahan (20:14:39/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Who is this Erin Callahan anyway? Never heard of a linguist by that name.]<<<<<
—Bowers (11:00:31/3-16-54)

>>>>>[And then there's the comment Aegis made a few files back about hearing the Council of Princes use a language other than Sperethiel. Any ideas?]<<<<<
—Copper (02 30.02/4-10-54)

In Sperethiel, context and intonation give words a wide range of subtle meanings and implications. Conventions of speech and address allow shadings of meaning that reflect the relative status of the speaker and the listener. A person speaking Sperethiel would not say the same thing to a superior in the same way as he or she would speak to an equal or an inferior. In this, Sperethiel closely resembles Japanese.

Verb Forms

Conjugate verbs using affixes.

Indicative Voice
Present Tense
Singular

First person:	*-ar*
Second person (formal):	*-it*
Second person (familiar):	*-ist*
Third person:	*-at*

Plural

First person:	*-aris*
Second person (formal):	*-int*
Second person (familiar):	*-intas*
Third person:	*-asta*

Imperative Voice

Singular:	*-o*
Plural:	*-osa*
Second person (formal):	*-int*
Second person (familiar):	*-intas*
Third person:	*-asta*

The subjunctive voice has several forms. Most common are the Normative (standard could/should/would constructions), Speculative, and Poetic.

Noun Forms

Declension of nouns is by context, prefix, or both. The following rules are only a guideline.

Singular
- Nominative: root word with no prefix
- Genitive: *ti-*
- Dative: context or *to-* (long "o" as in "toe")
- Accusative: context or *té-* (rhymes with "say")

Plural
- Nominative: affix *-sa*
- Genitive *si-*
- Dative: context or *so-* (long "o" as in "toe")
- Accusative: context or *sé-* (rhymes with "say")

SPERETHIEL GLOSSARY KEY

adj. = adjective
adv. = adverb
conj. = conjunction
(for) = formal
(inf) = informal
(ins) = insulting
interj. = interjection
mod. = modifier
n. = noun
prep. = preposition
v. = verb

a *conj.* Or.
carromeleg *n.* An elven martial arts style.
carronasto *n.* Stillness; non-motion.
celé *n.* A non-elf *homo sapiens.*
celénit *n.* Insulting form of celé.
co *prep.* To. Shifts to *con* before a vowel
daron *v.* To die.
faskit *n.* Legal code; law.
goro *n.* Outsider, one who is not a Tir subject; a stranger.
goronagee *n.* One apart, especially an elf not part of an elven group.
goronagit *n.* Insulting form of *goronagee.*
goronit *n.* (ins) Barbarian.
-ha *adj.* Suffix indicating emphatic repetition <*versoniel-ha*, "a real butthole">
heng *v.* To speak or understand a language
heron *v.* To be alive; to exist.
irenis *n.* Casteless, indicating no rank.
im *v.* To be
imiri *n.* Memory of something, memorial.
-it Derisive suffix, becomes *-nit* after a vowel.
li (for) Interrogative affix.
li-ha "Isn't that so?"
llayah *adv.* Okay; sure. Literally, "I agree with you" or "I will do it."
makkaherinit *n.* A young and foolish person.
makkalos *n.* Stupidity.
makkanagee *adj.* Willfully stupid.
medaron *n.* Death.
meleg *v.* To feel in a physical manner.
milessaratish: *n.* Servant-soldier; bondsman. In current usage, a field agent or undercover operative.
morkhan *n.* A fornicator of swine.
nagé *adj.* Willful.
-nagee *adv.* Willfully.
od *conj.* And.
ozidan *v.* To leave behind.
perest *v.* To have.
pechet *prep.* Except for.
qua (inf) Interrogative affix.
raé *n.* (inf) An elf.
raén *n.* (for) One who is of the people, an elf.
resp *v.* To listen.
reth *n.* Elf. Literally, "listener of harmony."

-ri Interrogative suffix, also used rhetorically. <"Is that not so?">
rillabothlen *n.* An unresolved chord in music. Poetically, an unresolved situation in a relationship.
rinellé *n.* Rebel; deserter.
saliah *n.* Silence, non speech.
samriel *n.* Discomfort, implying necessary discomfort as in medical treatment
se Positive beneficial prefix
serathillon *n.* Attraction that cannot be denied. Demanding desire.
serulos *n.* Machismo; childish masculinity
se'seterin "Bright morning" <good morning>.
shatatain *n.* A combat stance of *carromeleg*.
shay *n.* Forest.
sielle *adv.* Yes. Literally, "it is the way of things."
speren *n.* Harmony, peacefulness.
sperethiel *n.* **1.** Speech. **2. Sperethiel.** Elvish; the elven language.
teheron *n.* Life; existence.
têch *Interj.* Common curse word equivalent to drek.
teleg *v.* Maintain a condition <*telego carronasto*, "keep still">.
thelem *n.* Law of nature.
thiel *n.* Music. Poetically, a pleasant sound.
tl *prep.* Of. Shifts to *t'* before a vowel.
-tish *adj.* Suffix. One who, as in *one who* (verbs) *or one who is a* (noun). Often an *i* is inserted between a consonant and the suffix, as in *telegitish*, "keeper."
veresp *v.* To reply, to answer.
versakhan *n.* An enemy.
wineg *n.* An ork or troll. (Insulting, as *troglodyte*)
-ya *mod.* A negator suffix.
zarien *n.* Zen-like satori state.

MAGIC

Magic use pervades Tir Tairngire at a higher level than in virtually any other North American country, with the possible exception of the Trans-Polar Aleut nation. Studies show proportionately more magically active individuals in the Tir than anywhere else in the world.

>>>>>[Why is that? Anybody have a guess?]<<<<<
—Tigger (04:02:31/2-12-54)

>>>>>[Some statistics suggest that more hermetic magicians are elves than any other metatype.]<<<<<
—Lael (18:33:38/2-13-54)

>>>>>[Only those statistical reviews published by militantly pro-elf polis, Lael my dear chummer. Ignore them.]<<<<<
—Neddy (14:05:21/2-15-54)

>>>>>[Maybe more elves use magic because their society fosters a more accepting attitude. In the Tir, people don't look at mages like strange and alien beings. I'm convinced that lots of kids in Seattle who have the Talent suppress it—consciously or subconsciously—because they don't want to be considered "weird."]<<<<<
—Cal (20:07:59/2-15-54)

>>>>>[It's gotta be something in the fragging water. The government labs put chemicals in the drinking water to turn people into spellworms.]<<<<<
—Astro (09:21.04/2-17-54)

>>>>>[And I thought you were sentient, Astro...]<<<<<
—McQueen (19:59:14/2-19-54)

>>>>>[The elves teach basic magical theory in junior high. The course presents an overview, like Seattle schools teach physics. It's mainly academic, but they throw in some practical work as well, including aptitude testing. This helps the Tir avoid the situation that I believe exists in Seattle; I bet a lot of potential mages go through their whole lives without knowing they've got the Talent at all.]<<<<<
—Vernon (12:14:13/3-01-54)

>>>>>[The higher proportion of magic users could be a result of a higher background count in various parts of the nation. I discuss this possibility on the open board.]<<<<<
—Paul Dent (16:09:43/3-18-54)

>>>>>[I doubt there's anything in the water per se, but there just might be something in the air. Statistics prove that the Awakening

had a greater effect on the Pacific Northwest than on the rest of North America. This uneven magic flow has also been proven to have had a greater effect on Ireland/Tir Nan Og. Both places sustain grand and ancient magical traditions, certainly a valid qualification.

Places of power run through the Tir, much like the ley lines and sites in the British Isles and elsewhere; they're just not publicly known. The Council sees to that. I cannot prove it, but many sources hint that the site of Tir Tairngire was not chosen randomly or for convenience.]<<<<<

—Aegis (06.19 02/3-28-54)

Because of this relative wealth of mages, the people of the Tir use magic in ways that other countries would consider frivolous or wasteful. Many mages sell their skills as entertainment. (For example, two "restaurants" in Salem target dieters by serving cunning magical illusions of food.) Spirits or elementals often guard construction sites and similar locales; magical and astral security is a booming business.

The current fashion encourages those with the time and money to dabble in magic, even those who lack magical aptitude. The most recent trend is to collect fetishes and foci, whether or not the collector can use them. Thanks to the general public collecting fetishes, more talismongers continue to open shop in the elven nation. There are now more talismongers per capita in Tir Tairngire than anywhere else in the world.

>>>>>[Ya know, when people talk about magic in the Tir, they always mean hermetics. What about shamans? There's got to be some. .]<<<<<

—Oxbow (14.44 24/3-30-54)

>>>>>[Yes, shamans live in the Tir, but not many. The educational focus in both schools and universities concentrates on the hermetic side. Most of the shamans in the elven nation are Amerindians who found themselves just kinda flowing with their tradition.]<<<<<

—Mike (23:40:10/4-2-54)

>>>>>[Odd how the elves, the back-to-nature environmentalist Mother Earthers, use primarily hermetic magic. Taking all factors into consideration, one would think they'd be shamanic. It certainly seems to fit in better with their world view.]<<<<<

—Ginger Root (02:51:12/4-3-54)

>>>>>[A key to this may lie in the way Tir schools teach the concept of shamanism. The mainstream magic instructors consider shamans to have a confused world view, and consider the structured, rational hermetic style of study more adaptable to meeting the "challenges of the future."]<<<<<

—Teacher (12:41:14/4-3-54)

>>>>>[The Tir also has a few druids kicking around. (No drek, *druids*, like in England.) They remain a largely silent minority.]<<<<<

—Gerard (19 08:43/4-4-54)

>>>>>[Not true, Gerard. The druids are few but very influential. I don't know why, and I wish I did.]<<<<<

—Lizzie (23:25:57/4-4-54)

>>>>>[There's a...I guess you'd call it a "circle" of druids, who're close chummers of Sean Laverty. They go to his house all the time, sometimes staying for a couple of days. Don't know what they're up to.]<<<<<

—Tiger (22:03:30/4-6-54)

>>>>>[They're not druids.]<<<<<

—Walker (17:17:01/4-7-54)

>>>>>[Some shamans in the Tir are not Amerindians. Like the druids, there's not many of them, but they're pretty influential too, I guess. (Now that I think about it, they hang with Laverty too. Wonder what to make of that?)]<<<<<

—Tiff (03:31:29/4-8-54)

>>>>>[Professor Laverty supports wide-ranging interests and a keen academic curiosity. There is no more mysterious reason.]<<<<<

—Mallon (21:29:34/4-9-54)

>>>>>[These shamans do not follow animal forms, or even symbolic personifications. They follow form. They follow truth. They follow Passion.]<<<<<

—Walker (09:48:40/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Heeheeheeheeheehheeheeheeheeheehee ehehe hee heh eheh eh heheh. Walker, I suspect you are a walking dead man. I'll send flowers.]<<<<<

—The Laughing Man (08:39:36/4-11-54)

>>>>>[This is an unexpected development. I revise my earlier comment: this file will upset more than a few. But since the seed is here, I'll spread a little fertilizer: for more information (of a completely blasphemous nature) I recommend Jung's *Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* (1934/1954), the bulk of Joseph Cambell's writings, and Sargent's insightful (and precognitive) *Images of Personal Transformation* (1996).

I should point out that what we are talking about in this amazing elliptical manner is the definition of blasphemy in the Tir. The Tir presents itself as a humanistic nation, tolerant of all religions while supporting none and quietly wishing they'd all go away. A movement is stirring in the Tir to bring about a spiritual awakening in that nation similar to the Ways and Paths practiced in Tir Nan Og. An unspoken mandate exists in the Council of Princes to ensure that this does not happen. That is all I can say.]<<<<<

—Aegis (07:17 30/4-12-54)

>>>>>[Ways and Paths? What the frag is that? I read that the Irish elves mainly followed shamanism. Isn't that right?]<<<<<

—Teddy (21:18:51/4-13-54)

>>>>[Not at all. To those who don't understand, the elven approach to magic could appear shamanic or hermetic, depending on how you analyze it. There's not enough space to go into it here, but I know

that a document similar to this one is enroute from deep with the Tir (Nan Og) The deciphered snippets I've seen are truly frightening in their implications, not only for today, but maybe the next thousand years.]<<<<<

—Irish Way Back (07:25:12/4-14-54)

ENTERTAINMENT

Tir Tairngire offers entertainment designed to appeal to every social class and artistic taste.

>>>>>[The Tir culture is ambiguous and confusing, mainly because such a strong dichotomy distinguishes different facets of its national personality. The fine arts are very highbrow, contrasted with hurling and other "lowbrow" pursuits. A strong tradition of science and rationality stands face to face with a huge population of New-Agers and crystal-wavers. Genetic engineering and other forms of cutting-edge biotech receive lots of money and effort, but at the same time, a strong tradition of magic underpins everything. Cities representing the epitome of the urban planner's art lie between vast wilderness regions filled with paranimals and free spirits wandering everywhere

Can somebody explain it to me?]<<<<<

—Dazed & Confused (13.12 38/4-2-54)

>>>>>[Nothing to explain, D&C. That's the Tir. It just *is*.]<<<<<

—Fran (18 36 23/4-5-54)

TRIDEO

Tir Tairngire offers two national trideo channels, Tir Tairngire Trideo (TTT) and the Tir Tairngire Broadcasting Corporation (TTBC). The two independent corporations appear to compete for viewers, but apart from their call signs, little separates them.

Because they receive government funding, they do not depend on high viewership to attract advertisers and generate revenue. Even if nobody watched them, these stations' budgets would remain the same. As nationally sponsored broadcasting facilities, both TTT and TTBC follow the party line without exception. Government censors scrutinize every show, from the nightly news to the ever-present gardening programs, editing out anything they consider detrimental to government interests or "inappropriate" for the public to know.

>>>>>[That policy sometimes leads to very short news shows. I was in The Dalles—a small city right on the border—during the most recent scrap the Tir fought with the Salish-Shidhe. I had the trid on while the S-S commandos were blowing drek up—the shock waves were shaking the walls of my room—and the TTBC's lead news item was a puff-piece about some minor-league Salem politico. Ain't censorship grand?]<<<<<

—Marlene Z (16:59:01/2-10-54)

The Tir supports a small local trideo industry that produces high-quality programs. Unfortunately, the average viewership for these productions also remains small.

>>>>>[A polite way of saying the only people who watch the bleeding things are the director and his mother.]<<<<<

—Bung (05:01:42/3-8-54)

>>>>>[True. The production quality *is* exceptional, but who wants to watch glacially-paced historical drama elucidating the details of life during some completely unimportant time period?]<<<<<

—Thumbs (03:46:44/3-19-54)

Three years ago, the government began to broadcast feeds from all major network affiliates in Seattle and San Francisco. These feeds have a five-minute delay, however, so that the Tir censors can cut "unacceptable" material.

>>>>>[They usually concentrate on editing the news reports, but they also follow an unwritten rule against showing elves and other metatypes working or playing together in harmony. (Can't hint that segregation *isn't* the way to go, can you?)]<<<<<

—Faith No More (17:48:01/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Frag the cable feed. Pick the stuff straight off the satellites, and let the censors work themselves blind for nothing]<<<<<

—Pirate (22:06:39/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Yeah, you *could* do that, *but*...the Tir made personal satellite dishes *illegal* some time back. Even if you decide to risk flouting the law, you might not get much for your trouble. The military routinely fills the Tir's airwaves with jamming transmissions on the most common satellite broadcast frequencies.]<<<<<

—Faith No More (18:32:33/3-15-54)

>>>>>[When I first saw trid in the Tir, I thought I was back in England. Bloody gardening shows in prime time, or stuffed shirts arguing inconsequential political minutiae. The only thing missing was sitcoms for the lobotomized, complete with synthesized laugh-tracks. And the sport coverage was good...if you happen to like hurling.]<<<<<

—Tommy (17:17:03/3-16-54)

>>>>>[What the frag's hurling anyway? Sounds like some kind of regurgitative problem...]<<<<<

—Bung (18:32:48/3-17-54)

>>>>>[See the explanation below.]<<<<<

—Carlo (23:35:18/3-17-54)

>>>>>[Go Marchers!!]<<<<<

—Fenian Fan (16:29:28/3-22-54)

Far fewer people own trideos in the Tir than in the UCAS. The last survey showed that only 70 percent of Tir households owned a trideo set, and fewer than 35 percent owned more than one.

>>>>>[No wonder, considering what's on.]<<<<<

—Christine (20 02 03/3-10-54)

HURLING

Hurling, a fast-paced, energetic game combining elements of field hockey and rugby, is the national sport of Tir Tairngire.

>>>>>[.and elements of hand-to-hand combat and general mayhem.]<<<<<

—Carlo (23:38:40/3-17-54)

Six teams belong to the National Hurling Association, and perhaps twice that number make up amateur leagues. The NHA is a professional body on par with UCAS professional sports associations; ticket sales and trideo revenue combined support the teams and the Association without any government funding. The NHA season runs from September to March. Each team plays a total of twelve games a season.

Hurling is to Tir Tairngire as football (soccer) is to Great Britain: a sport, a diversion, and a national obsession. The Association broadcasts all NHA games to every region; despite this generous policy, every NHA game sells out to SRO crowds. Ticket prices range from 18 nuyen to about 70 nuyen, depending on the seat.

The roster of teams in the NHA follows, in descending order of their ranking last season:

Portland Marchers
Salem Kinsmen
Albany Wanderers
Dalles Greens
Bend Journeymen
Eugene Lords

>>>>>[Those are the prices you pay at the box office. There's a healthy secondary tickets market for hot games—like the Marchers versus the Kinsmen—and street prices often top 325¥. Even then, fistfights break out over the right to pay these outrageously inflated prices.]<<<<<

—Manx (17:38:30/3-12-54)

>>>>>[Okay, Spes tells you *about* hurling, but he doesn't tell you what it is. Here's a quick run-down on the rules (or lack thereof) and how the game flows.

The players try to carry or throw the ball, using a curved stick (the hurley), into the opponent's goal, with the winner getting the most goals. The field is 80 meters wide and 140 meters long, with a goal at each end. The goalposts stand 5 meters high and 7 meters apart, joined by a crossbar 3 meters above the ground. A net is connected to the uprights and the crossbar in the style of a soccer goal. The ball, or "slitter," is 25 centimeters in diameter. The hurley is nearly a meter long, a narrow shaft ending in a wide, curved blade—similar to a field hockey stick, if you know what that looks like.

Those are the tools of the trade. Each team has fifteen players, currently all men, though a mixed-sex team in Albany has a petition before the Association for membership in the league. To play the game, a player must pick up the slitter on the curved portion of his hurley, carry it as far as he can without getting maimed in the process, and hurl it into the opponent's goal. A player can pick the slitter off a hurley with his hand, but cannot run with it or throw it. Players must use the hurley to pick the ball up off the ground. A team

earns three points for getting the slitter into the opponents' net, and one point for chucking the ball over the net between the uprights. And that's about it. It's fast-moving, and rough as hell.

Until you see it played live, you'll never understand the brutality of the game. Players really wind up when they decide to heave the ball 100 meters, and they don't give a flying frag if someone's teeth are in the way of their stick's follow through. The rules state that in order to tackle another player, you must be "attempting to play the ball." In practice, this means you can maim another player if he has the ball, just had the ball, or is suspected of having handled the ball in recent memory. The NHA-published rules caution against "unnecessary roughness," but the officials rarely call it as long as the victims still have all their limbs attached after a hit.

And if you think I'm exaggerating, check the last season's NHA statistics. Three deaths in the course of play, and seven life-threatening injuries (read "maimings"). This is a serious game.]<<<<<

—Carlo (00:01:43/3-18-54)

>>>>>[The NHA is for off-the-rack players only—no modifications allowed. Some UCAS money-men tried to drum up interest in an "unlimited" league in Portland, but nobody bit. The game's lethal enough as it is.]<<<<<

—Manx (17:54:51/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Go Marchers!!]<<<<<

—Fenian Fan (16 35:37/3-22-54)

>>>>>[You berks up in Seattle mistakenly think that combat biking and Urban Brawl are hot tickets. Chummers, you ain't seen *nothing* until you've seen a standing-room-only crowd at the Royal Coliseum in Salem watching some major hurling game, going out of their heads doing "the wave"—yes, yes, I know: very retro—complete with magical pyrotechnics!]<<<<<

—Laidlaw (09:36:36/3-24-54)

>>>>>[Much better to watch it on the trid: less chance of getting yourself geeked. Sometimes the violence in the stands is worse than that on the field. (I can practically see the players stopping the game and watching the carnage in the stands, cheering for sections of the audience...)]<<<<<

—Hammer (20 40.03/3-27-54)

>>>>>[And that, *makkaherinit*, is why civilized people do not watch hurling.]<<<<<

—Tingué (21 06.40/4-5-54)

>>>>>[Dandelion-eating toff...]<<<<<

—Dretch (13:25:04/4-6-54)

ARTS

Culture plays an important part in Tir Tairngire society. Artists—whether painters, sculptors, musicians or experts at computer graphics—receive the kind of respect reserved in the UCAS for sports greats or novastars. The High Prince frequently honors highly respected artists on the Royal Birthday with promotion in social rank.

Tir art draws on an eclectic range of influences, from classical and traditional styles to cutting edge, foreign, and other unusual elements. At present, music is going through an experimental phase, pushing the experience and limits of musicians and audiences alike.

>>>>>[Testing the limits of audience boredom, you mean.]<<<<<

—Mackie (11:47.36/2-19-54)

>>>>>[That's the highbrow drek, and if you listen to that you deserve to have your brains run out your ears, that's what I say.

For *real* music, Portland shows a real scuffling underground music scene, putting out some of the hottest shag-rock and chrome-rock sounds you're going to hear anywhere. Slammed by the intelligentsia, of course, but who gives a frag?]<<<<<

—DJ Jeff (03:32:49/2-24-54)

The High Prince displays one of the most extensive existing collections of paintings and sculpture in the public wing of the palace. The nation, not Lugh Surehand, owns this collection.

>>>>>[Not to say Surehand doesn't own an extensive personal collection.]<<<<<
—Slim (23 42 36/3-4-54)

>>>>>["Public wing" of the palace—don't make me laugh. That wing is only "public" if you're of Royal rank, and if the High Prince is feeling hospitable that day.]<<<<<
—Nak (20:19:42/3-7-54)

>>>>>[From what I hear, Surehand's private collection includes a couple of "lost works" by some of the old masters: unregistered pieces by Rembrandt, Constable, and Picasso that somehow "just turned up."]<<<<<
—Curious Curator (14.44 48/3-8-54)

>>>>>[I heard the same thing. Sean Laverty also owns a couple of "lost works;" *his* private collection includes a Gainsborough, two van Goghs and a Grandma Moses. Can you even imagine how much they must be worth?]<<<<<
—Connie (20 31 38/3-8-54)

>>>>>[You can stop salivating. they're forgeries, all of them. Very good forgeries, but forgeries just the same. A chummer of mine had the opportunity to examine some of these lost works, and the pigments used are no more than a couple of years old. Granted, the workmanship is unbelievable—the brushstrokes, style, and so on match perfectly—but they're not the real thing.]<<<<<
—Tanmera (12:00 27/3-9-54)

>>>>>[Okay, boys and girls, here's how it works. Some computer wiz has come up with a program that analyzes the style and technique of a painting and replicates it exactly. Not only that, but the program can merge the styles of different artists. Let's say you wanted a still life rendered in a style that was a cross between Constable and Warhol (what a grotesque concept!). This computer program could do it for you. That's where the forgeries come from: they're examples of the program producing "pure" styles.]<<<<<
—Dominic (04.23:40/3-10-54)

>>>>>[*Bulldrek!!* That's purely impossible.]<<<<<
—Electron Pusher (07:05.12/3-10-54)

The upper ranks and the intelligentsia enjoy live theater, and so the government funds three separate theater companies; one repertory, and two devoted to staging new works.

Art Education

A unique element of the Tir art/cultural environment is the emphasis the Tir education system places on art education. This emphasis goes beyond art history and appreciation to cultivate creativity and instruct in technique. All students in the Tir elementary, secondary, and high school levels must take art technique classes until each student finds one or more art forms in which he or she can adequately express himself. The definition of art extends beyond the traditional forms taught in school, such as painting and sculpting, to include embroidery, *bonsai*-like tree cultivation, manuscript illumination, and other art forms, and uses both conventional and high tech tools.

The Art Education Act of 2041 gave this educational policy the force of national law.

>>>>>[Wow. Okay, so they like art. Good for them, I guess..]<<<<<
—Bung (05:15:29/3-15-54)

>>>>>[Spes fails to mention that though the Tir pushes art heavily, it pushes only conservative and traditional styles. Experimental art is right out. Interpretive art is right out. They stress mastery of technique, *not* expression. What's the fraggin' point?]<<<<<
—Brush Stroker (03:02:51/3-18-54)

IRISH CONNECTIONS

Much of what makes up Tir Tairngire and elven culture shows the pervasive influence of Irish/Celtic history and culture. Does this influence derive from the fact that the Celtic cultures include the primary mythological sources of elven and faerie lore? That would certainly account for the large number of elves who chose Gaelic names for themselves. However, the astounding similarities between elements of the Awakening and Irish-European mythology make a direct and obvious connection. (Though I must point out that, despite the common misconception, families of Irish or Gaelic heritage did not give birth to any greater percentage of elves, except in Ireland herself, than families of any other European heritage.)

The connection between Tir Tairngire and Ireland was strongest in the early days of the Tir. As Tir Nan Og grew in power, however, attitudes began to change. Far fewer children born in Tir Tairngire now receive Irish surnames, and it has become unpopular to follow historical or mythological Irish traditions. This unofficial policy began filtering down from the highest levels of the Tir government more than a decade ago. Among the most visible results, certain Irish/Celtic terms formerly used by the government are being phased out. For example, Tir judges, once called *brehon*, are today more often referred to as magistrates.

The Tir government clearly made a deliberate effort to disassociate Tir elven culture from the Irish/Celtic meta-culture emerging in Tir Nan Og. This move appears to be a direct repudiation of Tir Nan Og's acceptance and elevation of that culture, rather than a rejection of any elements of the culture itself.

This rejection of a known culture leaves Tir Tairngire's own culture in flux. Its creators seemed determined to establish immediate respect for the new culture by weaving elements of Irish culture and mythology with monarchical grandeur. Unfortunately for them, Tir Nan Og appears to have done a better job of reaching that same goal. The Tir's social planners must now determine how to maintain a sense of inherited cultural history without relying on their Irish/Celtic origins.

ECONOMY

The Council of Princes continuously points to the managed economy of Tir Tairngire as one of their greatest achievements. At first glance, their pride seems justified. No unemployment, no inflation, a trade balance that Japan would kill for...who can argue with that?

No one at all...if it is true.

The problem, of course, is finding out the truth. Raw data on the Tir's economy remains a closely held secret, available only to the Council members and their designates. Drones throughout the governmental infrastructure know various pieces of the puzzle, but no one outside the Council can see the whole picture.

This state of affairs raises an interesting question: just *why* is the Tir's Gross National Product such a big secret? Is it that good? Or that bad? The Council *could* publish false numbers—no one could check on them—but they don't.

The Council *does* release some figures, such as unemployment statistics. Currently, the Council points to zero unemployment as their proudest accomplishment Zero for 2052, zero for 2051, zero for as far back as Tir history goes. The Tir government has a perfect record of metahuman resource utilization—on paper.

Of course, the numbers are pure buildrek. Figures such as unemployment statistics have no meaning without defining the formula used to calculate them. And the Tir uses a formula that *guarantees* a zero unemployment rate First, the government bean counters include only citizens in the calculation, conveniently ignoring the many non-citizens out of work. Second, the formula considers only those people deemed "employable." Anyone lacking a skill set that will get them hired becomes officially "unemploy*able*," not "unemployed," and is not included in the figures. Finally, the unemployment figures are always "seasonally adjusted," using voodoo economics to ensure the calculations produce the result the Council wants.

>>>>>[As a way of passing a slow Sunday afternoon, we decided to check out Spes' assertions. Not a good idea Security in the Tir's matrix is tighter than a devil rat's rectum, and not even the Red Wraith had a wiz time. The only conceivable reason anybody would distribute the economic tracking systems so widely is to ensure that nobody within the government can get an overall view. That bespeaks some pretty fragging serious paranoia, if you ask me.]<<<<<

—Dead Deckers Society (17:37:12/5-21-54)

NATIONAL ECONOMY

The national economy breaks down into two distinct parts: the "internal" economy and the "external " The internal economy comprises the exchange of money, goods, and services within the Tir, and the external economy comprises the exchange of money, goods, and services across the border in the form of imports and exports.

The nation's internal economy appears strange to those unfamiliar with the way the Tir works. Most foreign observers categorize a nation as corporate—like the UCAS (and by extension Seattle), where the actions of megacorporations largely drive the economy—or non-corporate, like some of the poorer Native American Nations, where cottage industries drive the economy. The Tir does not fit comfortably into either classification. The nation has its share of powerful national corporations, but a significant part of its economy comprises smaller, non-incorporated cottage industries.

In the corporate sector the most important industries revolve around biotechnology: genetic engineering, bioengineering, cloning, transimplant technologies, vat-grown tissue and so on.

>>>>>[Freeze it a minute—did the slag say "cloning?" No wonder there's so many fragging dandelion eaters...]<<<<<
—Tober (10:54:18/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Watch it, Tober, your bigotry's showing. Nobody—not even the Tir elves—can actually clone a whole, viable human or metahuman. Duplicating a person is still science-fiction drek. What *isn't* drek is the technique of growing new tissue cloned from a small sample and forcing it to differentiate into the kind of tissue you want: a new eye, say, a new liver, whatever happened to get shot off or mangled beyond repair. The vat-job outfits in Seattle and everywhere else in the world are doing that, and only bullet-heads like you don't know it.]<<<<<
—Doc Dicer (19.47:57/3-28-54)

>>>>>[Dicer's right, of course, but give the elves their due—the research outfits in the Tir have pushed the technology further than anyone else anywhere in the world. Some scientists in Japan would give their left nuts for a quick browse through the research data bases of, say, New Dawn Biotechnologies.]<<<<<
—Sydney (20:00:16/4-2-54)

Tir corps also dominate the data processing and computer design industries.

>>>>>[A couple of TT corps design and build hardware, but not many. More of them develop software, but again not that many. The Tir truly excels in fundamental breakthroughs—like new insights into data processing theory, faster, more elegant algorithms, innovative data structures, those kinds of things. Typically, the Tir corps license these breakthroughs to foreign corps, which develop them into viable products.]<<<<<
—Digital Ace (08:10:04/3-19-54)

>>>>>[So what does that mean? The elves don't like to dirty their lily-white hands with filthy lucre?]<<<<<
—Bung (18.09:03/3-19-54)

>>>>>[They've got no qualms about making money. The companies and individuals that license off some breakthrough just rake in the nuyen, chummer. It's more like intellectual snobbishness, I'd guess. "It takes an artist to make the breakthrough, but any grunt technician can industrialize it," that kind of attitude.]<<<<<
—Digital Ace (07:29:13/3-20-54)

High technology and the low cost of entry into the so-called cottage industries have prompted many individuals or small groups around the world to go into business for themselves. Nowhere is this trend more prevalent than in the Tir. Almost 50 percent of the work force is self-employed, or employed by a company with fewer than ten employees.

Most of these cottage industries serve the leisure, art, entertainment, or other "luxury" markets, because the Tir boasts a relatively high standard of living, considerable wealth, and large amounts of leisure time. Subjects of the Tir enjoy much more free time than do citizens of UCAS, for example, and possess more disposable income. Entrepreneurs have capitalized on this situation, offering services and products in little or no demand in any other nation.

>>>>>[Except among corp suits.]<<<<<
—Laser (23:10:10/3-11-54)

>>>>>[I scanned a list of small companies in the Tir, and you *would not believe* some of the businesses they're into. Here are some selected gems:

Lutharian Ambient Music: This outfit'll help you pick the kind of music to play for particular social events or tailor a day-long program to match your biorhythm, I drek you not.

Transcendental Genealogy Service: These slags will trace your family tree back as far as you want to go. For an extra fee, they'll throw in past-life regression for you and your close blood-kin and generate a multilife family tree. Fraggin' weird.

Mount Hood Aroma Therapy: Get your emotions modified through the "scientific" use of perfumes and drek.

Hundreds more of these kinda slots do business in the Tir, but this gives you the idea.]<<<<<
—Shadowhawk (23:49:00/3-28-54)

>>>>>[I thought the New Age flatlined years ago. Sounds like these guys' watches stopped in 1992 .]<<<<<
—Hardnose (10:30:12/4-2-54)

>>>>>[Again, that's one of the ambiguities of the Tir. In some places the future is now; in others, fuzzy New Age pseudoscience and neo-mysticism flourish.]<<<<<
—Kilgore Trout (13:24.10/4-5-54)

In addition to personal services of various kinds, the cottage industries serve thriving art and magic markets. In fact, the Tir has a higher percentage of the population who list their official occupation as "artist" than in any other nation in the world, and the Tir boasts more registered talismongers than in all the other North American nations combined

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

The Tir enjoys a balance of trade envied by all other developed nations. The total nuyen value of its exports equals almost *three times* the nuyen value of its imports. In comparison, the UCAS maintains a negative trade balance, and Japan's exports and imports are roughly equal.

The Tir's major export is "intellectual property"—data processing algorithms, bioengineering techniques, genome maps for engineered viruses, and so forth, all licensed to foreign corporations or governments. The Tir also exports computer software; genetically modified organisms such as bacteriophages, targeted-pesticide bacteria, and new strains of wheat; and works of art. Despite strict prohibition, magical items are also a major export.

>>>>>[The Tir also exports orichalcum. It's not a legal export, but the government turns a blind eye.]<<<<<
—Llewellyn (11.00:24/3-29-54)

>>>>>[I keep hearing rumors there's an orichalcum mine somewhere near Government Camp on the slopes of Mount Hood.]<<<<<
—Lilo (09:19:09/4-3-54)

>>>>>[That's simply impossible. Orichalcum is made, not mined. It does *not* occur naturally.]<<<<<
—Magister (21:10:29/4-17-54)

>>>>>[Heh, heh, heh. He still doesn't get it, man.]<<<<<
—Minstral (02:13:51/4-19-54)

Major Tir imports include vehicles, heavy machinery, weapons and computer hardware. Though potentially self-sufficient with regard to food, the Tir does import specialty foodstuffs and small quantities of meat.

>>>>>[What about energy?]<<<<<
—Tenkiller (11:24:23/3-10-54)

>>>>>[TT's self-sufficient there too, thanks to hydroelectric projects in the Cascades, solar-collection panels in the eastern part of the nation, and some heavy-duty economy measures. And it's all very green.]<<<<<
—Mal (12:11:09/3-11-54)

>>>>>[What about the fragging nuke plant south of Portland, huh?]<<<<<
—Watson (09:21:27/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Well, yes, that would have something to do with it too.]<<<<<
—Mal (11:33:10/3-16-54)

STANDARD OF LIVING

The Council of Princes frequently boasts about the Tir's high standard of living, and even the Council's opponents admit the truth of these claims. The standard of living in the nation is high and climbing steadily. Annual per capita income stands at about 35,000 nuyen, compared to Seattle's at 25,000 nuyen. On the average, a worker spends no more than 1,500 hours per year at work, compared to Seattle's figure of well over 2,000 hours. These statistics mean the average Tir subject has more disposable income and enjoys more than 500 extra hours of leisure time per year than his counterpart in Seattle.

Conversely, the cost of living is low compared to Seattle's. Accommodations cost, on the average, four-fifths of what they cost in the Seattle metroplex. Even its greatest detractors admit that the Tir is a rich country.

>>>>>[Time to throw in some price comparisons, whaddaya say? I know the Keynesian Kid would love to provide you this service, but he's currently spending an extended "vacation" at an establishment that severely limits his access to the Matrix, if you get my drift. As the Kid would do, I'm using Seattle prices as baseline.

TIR TAIRNGIRE COST OF LIVING
(Note: Costs expressed as percentage of item cost in Seattle)

ITEM	COST
Weaponry	
Ammunition[1]	95%
Explosives[2]	—
Firearm Accessories[3]	90%
Firearms[4]	90%
Melee Weapons	75%
Projectile Weapons	70%
Throwing Weapons	75%
Armor and Clothing	
Armor[5]	95%
Security and Surveillance	
Communications	90%
Security Devices	100%
Surveillance Countermeasures	110%
Surveillance Measures	100%
Survival Gear	80%
Vision Enhancers	90%
Lifestyle	
Lifestyle	80%
Electronics	
Electronics	90%
Cybertech	
Biotech	75%
Bodyware	105%
Cyberdecks[6]	135%+
Headware	105%
Internals	105%
Programs	85%
Magical Equipment	
Hermetic Library	95%
Magical Supplies	85%
Magical Weapons	90%
Power Foci	90%
Ritual Sorcery Materials	95%
Spell Foci	90%
Vehicles	
Aircraft	105%
Boats	105%
Ground Vehicles	100%
Military Vehicles[7]	—

[1]The Tir gets tight-hooped about specialty rounds like explosives, flechettes, belt-fed, APDS, and its cousins. Legally, only the Tir military may possess any of these rounds

[2] Restricted to those with a government permit, not an easy item to get or forge. Needy individuals can sometimes pick up basic plastique in the shadows, but it'll cost.

[3] This refers only to accessories that could conceivably be used for hunting, such as scopes, rangefinders, and the like. Toys like silencers and smartgun links can only be acquired through the shadows, at a hefty premium.

[4] The NRA would hate it here. The Tir has banned autofire weapons, and requires all would-be gun buyers to undergo background checks and waiting periods.

[5] Light body armor only. Anything heavier than "personal defense" armor is strictly illegal.

[6] All imported, except for the units made for the Netwatch cops (and I *dare* you to get your meathooks on one of them)

[7] Yeah, right.]<<<<<

—The Chromed Bookkeeper (23:01:12/3-9-54)

>>>>>[The Tir has a managed economy—not centrally managed like those of the old Communist countries of the last century, but certainly not the laissez faire, free-market capitalism we see in the UCAS.]<<<<<

—Adam Smith (12:52:47/3-15-54)

CORPORATE PRESENCE

The Tir's laws create a distinction between national and multinational or foreign-owned corporations. National corporations are those based in Tir Tairngire, created and owned by Tir subjects. All these firms are at least partially nationalized, with the Council holding equity in them as a corporate entity. The level of this government ownership ranges from a token number of shares to a working voting majority. The Council *as a whole*, not individual members, owns shares in these corporations. The nation's corporate laws bar individual Council members from owning shares in national corporations, presumably to prevent conflicts of interest. In reality, these regulations merely require Council members to hide their financial tracks with enough finesse to fool the governmental watchdogs monitoring them. The Council's right to transfer any investigator getting close to something sensitive makes this petty criminal activity relatively easy. Multinationals, or megacorporations, must operate under tight restrictions, discussed later in this file.

>>>>>[Strictly speaking, Spes is right, but the princes don't seem to exploit their positions or interfere with the watchdog agencies as much as you'd expect.]<<<<<

—Stella (19:50:56/4-12-54)

>>>>>[Naive, Stella, still as naive as ever. The princes, the nobles—they create a huge amount of interference. Fortunately, so many competing sources get in on the act that they tend to cancel each other out most of the time. The Council members *all* have their fingers into plenty of different pies and keep themselves busy trying to reveal their rivals' involvements while concealing their own. Very Machiavellian, I know, but that's the Tir.]<<<<<

—Morgana (21:41:58/4-13-54)

>>>>>[Why does the Council want an equity position anyway? Don't they make enough money through taxes?]<<<<<

—Sam the Slam (10:42:36/4-18-54)

>>>>>[That's only part of the story. As an official shareholder, the government can't be excluded from annual general meetings and

such and can keep a closer eye on the corp without looking like it's interfering.]<<<<<

—Adam Smith (09:49:10/4-22-54)

NATIONAL CORPORATIONS

The information on the following corporations comes from Tir Tairngire's public business datanets. I have added my own observations to the business profiles.

TELESTRIAN INDUSTRIES CORPORATION

Home Office Location: Telestrian Habitat, Portland
President/CEO: James Telestrian III
Principal Divisions
Division Name: Telestrian Biotechnology
Division Head: Marie-Louise Telestrian
Chief Products/Services: Genetically engineered food crops and bacteriophages
Division Name: NeuroTech Computing
Division Head: Thomas Telestrian
Chief Products/Services: Neural networks, Expert Systems

Business Profile:

By far the most aggressive conglomerate in the Tir, Telestrian Industries has its fingers into just about every cutting-edge industry segment. Besides contracts with the Tir military and most branches of the Tir government, TIC holds licenses for many of the food crop species grown in the Tir.

Apart from the mandatory 5 percent owned by the government, all TIC shares are held by members of the Telestrian clan. Additionally, Telestrians hold all officer positions in the mother corporation and its subsidiary divisions. Many residents of the Tir complain about this blatant nepotism, with no effect on TIC

operations. Though the pool of job candidates may be restricted to family, James Telestrian III remains selective about which family members he hires. He does not always make the obvious choices—for example, passing over his son Timothy, a London School of Economics graduate, for his niece Lynne, a graduate of an undistinguished college—but his hires always seem to work out.

>>>>>[Let it be known that Timothy Telestrian is some bent that Lynne got "his" job. If any of you jokers out there are looking for some angle on TIC, Timothy might be it.]<<<<<
—Van Dyke (16:43:45/4-20-54)

Security/Military Forces: Information not available.

>>>>>[Check out the Telestrian Habitat next time you're in downtown Portland. Smaller than the Renraku Arcology in Seattle, but still fragging spectacky, chummers.]<<<<<
—Lou (05:10:28/3-28-54)

>>>>>[I keep hearing rumors that TIC's got a real-and-for-true AI up and running. Anybody check me on that?]<<<<<
—Slick (22 37.21/3-30-54)

>>>>>[Why is it that any corp with an enclosed habitat, arcology or not, is always supposedly perfecting the first AI??]<<<<<
—Jammer (23:01:15/3-30-54)

>>>>>[If it's anywhere, the AI's in NeuroTech's main data core. I tried for a look-see once and ran into some of the slickest cascading "smart" ice I've ever had the privilege of beating feet from. If that ice was driven by Expert Systems, they've made some serious breakthroughs. And if wasn't, *something* had to be behind it.]<<<<<
—Red Wraith (00:51:03/3-31-54)

>>>>>[TIC has contracts with the Tir military for bio-warfare agents. Chip truth, chummer. Check my entry under Military.]<<<<<
—Firewatcher (11:00:57/4-12-54)

>>>>>[James Telestrian *III*, eh? Then how come there are no records—*anywhere*—of a James Telestrian II? Hmmm?]<<<<<
—Byrne (13.03:16/4-17-54)

>>>>>[Truthfully? That *is* interesting...]<<<<<
—Lucas (20:46:41/4-20-54)

NEW DAWN CORPORATION

Home Office Location: One Central Plaza, Portland
President/CEO: Gavin Thibault
Principal Divisions
Division Name: New Dawn Medical Research
Division Head: Salvatore Mendez
Chief Products/Services: Synthetic and engineered hormones/enzymes
Division Name: New Dawn Pharmaceuticals
Division Head: Bryan Donahogh
Chief Products/Services: Custom-designed pharmaceuticals
Division Name: New Dawn Biotechnologies
Division Head: Daryl Hersch
Chief Products/Services: Vat-grown metahuman body tissue, cloning research

Business Profile:
New Dawn Corporation generates larger revenues than TIC, but is much less aggressive and therefore, less influential. The Tir government holds 25 percent of New Dawn's shares, and multiple layers of shell companies conceal the owners of the remaining stock. ND Medical Research is the world's largest developer and exporter of enzyme and hormone treatments for conditions ranging from Tourette's Syndrome to Alzheimer's.

Security/Military Forces: Information not available.

>>>>>[Not officially, maybe. But on the street, everyone knows that New Dawn has a *very* well trained and well-equipped security force. Interesting, *neh*? What does a sweetness-and-light, cure-the-sick-heal-the-wounded outfit like New Dawn need with such a megapunching army of badges?]<<<<<
—Landergost (11:34 07/3-3-54)

>>>>>[To protect their illegal drug business, maybe? That's right—New Dawn Pharmaceuticals develops some pretty wiz designer drugs, mainly for export. You want to light up your brain like a torch? Check out New Dawn's product line at a street corner near you...]<<<<<
—Knocker (15:37:03/3-12-54)

>>>>>[I concur with Knocker, but New Dawn's quality control does seem to be growing lax. A recent batch of Truluv—one of their best sellers, a combination energizer, psychedelic and aphrodisiac—killed at least fifteen people in Atlanta.]<<<<<
—Observer (14:00:11/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Check your facts, chummers. There is no evidence—I repeat, *no evidence*—that New Dawn is in the designer drug biz. Just wild speculation, totally unsupported by fact.]<<<<<
—Bluegenes (21:44:43/3-20-54)

WILLAMETTE COMPUSTAT CORPORATION

Home Office Location: Willamette Court, Salem
President/CEO: Darcy Dybhavn
Principal Divisions
Division Name: Willamette Compustat Data Processing
Division Head: Rhonda Hayes
Chief Products/Services: Data processing and analysis
Division Name: Willamette Compustat Consulting
Division Head: Sarah Browstowe
Chief Products/Services: Data processing consultation
Division Name: Remote Technologies
Division Head: Theresa Davis

Chief Products/Services: Tele-operation and telepresence technologies

Business Profile:

Founded by Darcy Dybhavn in 2043, Willamette Compustat is the largest data processing provider in the Tir. Most national corporations and even several foreign megacorps contract data processing work out to Willamette Compustat (nothing sensitive, of course).

The company sells no hardware or software. Everything the firm develops is used internally or licensed off to others. A design by Dybhavn herself forms the core of Compustat's main system, but firms such as Cray, IBM-MSX and NeuroTech Computing supplied the peripheral systems and subprocessor arrays.

Security/Military Forces: Minimal

>>>>>[*Physical* security may be minimal. *Matrix* security is fragging lethal.]<<<<<
—Red Wraith (01:16:21/3-31-54)

>>>>>[Maybe we should define some terms here. The way I read Spes' comments, "Security/Military Forces" refers to the kind of assets a company can put in the field to "project force," to use military doublespeak. The Willamette group doesn't seem to go in for that drek at all—it's got no street ops, no corp cops, nothing like that.

Security at the corp's facilities is another story. Only the best shadow teams would have the slightest chance of physically penetrating the Willamette group's offices, and even they would get bloody doing it.]<<<<<
—Ozzie (13:21.20/4-2-54)

>>>>>[The corp's main office, near Willamette University, is small because very few employees actually work there. They're into telecommuting in a big way. Most "knowledge workers" stay at home and just dial their work in.]<<<<<
—Peters (22:23.11/4-5-54)

GENOME TECHNOLOGIES CORPORATION

Home Office Location: Gabriel Park Industrial Center, Portland
President/CEO: Jonas Gallagher
Principal Divisions
Division Name: Genome Research
Division Head: Samuel Luthien
Chief Products/Services: Genetic engineering research
Division Name: GTC Applied Technologies
Division Head: Ernest Hawkins
Chief Products/Services: Vat-grown metahuman tissue, bio-replacement technologies

Business Profile:

New Dawn's major competitor in the field of vat-grown replacement tissue, Genome Technologies is a relative newcomer to the industry. Its founder and principal shareholder, Jonas Gallagher, used to work for New Dawn but resigned under something of a pall. New Dawn approached the Arbitration Council, demanding a restraining order to prevent Gallagher from competing with his former employers, but for reasons of their own, the council refused New Dawn's request.

>>>>>["For reasons of their own?" Those reasons wouldn't happen to be that the Council of Princes—to whom the Arbitration Council bows—kicked in a lot of the start-up money for GTC, would they? Nah...]<<<<<
—Skeleton Hunter (13:50:51/4-1-54)

GTC is currently raising funds to spin off a chain of body shops, using tissue from their own growing vats.

Security/Military Forces: Information not available.

>>>>>[GTC is into some pretty heavy-duty genetic engineering. The buzz says they're modifying certain paranormal animals, turning them into some nasty little watch-critters.]<<<<<
—Darwin (02:24:13/3-2-54)

>>>>>[In downtown Portland?]<<<<<
—Nat (11:31:10/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Of course not, you slot. The Gabriel Park facility houses their corporate offices only. They've got a research facility out in Tygh Valley where they do all their gene-twisting.]<<<<<
—Darwin (01:00:26/3-5-54)

>>>>>[I know the place you mean, Darwin. A real corp zero-zone—some of the tightest security this side of the military. Almost as much of it seems designed to stop things getting *out* as to stop people getting in...Just what are they doing there? Anybody know?]<<<<<
—Paddy (02:31:15/3-7-54)

>>>>>[No, Paddy. But a word to the wise for anyone who's considering going in for a peek: they've got sirens guarding the place. That's right, sirens—*Siren canori*, those pintsize pterodactyl-like things. (See Paterson's *Paranormal Animals of North America* for details.)]<<<<<
—Leather & Lace (14.28 03/3-15-54)

>>>>>[Really? How interesting. Several years ago, when Paterson's was first posted, I published my conclusions that sirens are a genetically engineered species. Now I wonder whether Jonas Gallagher had any hand in that?]<<<<<
—Sagan (20:34:10/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Sometimes GTC vat tissue is available in Seattle. If you can get it, it's more than worth the price premium.]<<<<<
—Doc Dicer (16:30:33/4-2-54)

ANDALUSIAN LIGHT INDUSTRIES

Home Office Location: Portland, Tir Tairngire
President/CEO: Michael Demarco

Principal Divisions
Division Name: Andalusian Manufacturing
Division Head: Heather McAdams
Chief Products/Services: Light manufacturing technology

Business Profile:
Andalusian Light Industries is a small Tir corporation, but also acts as a holding company for a half-dozen smaller Tir companies. Through these holdings, its interests range from personal electronics, to hygiene appliances, to automobile spare parts.

Security/Military Profile: Andalusian Light Industries maintains a small corporate security force.

>>>>>[Andalusian is privately held by the Oakforest family according to the scuttlebutt. I've got no other information. Anyone else?]<<<<<
—Stocker (10:37:10/3-18-54)

MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS

The Tir Council first allowed multinational megacorporations to operate within the Tir less than five years ago. The Council exerts such strict control over megacorp activity that some multinationals refuse to play in the Tir Tairngire market.

Restrictions on Megacorporate Activity

Strictly speaking, megacorps cannot operate within the Tir—only specially created subsidiaries can. Not corporations in the legal sense, these subsidiaries do not enjoy corporate protection from creditors and other legal difficulties.

The Tir Council requires the subsidiaries to issue megacorporate shares, at a par value negotiated between the parent megacorp and the subsidiaries at creation. The Council then buys 5 percent of those shares at the negotiated value, assigning the remaining shares to the individual tapped as the president/CEO of the subsidiary. This individual must be a Tir subject or receive special dispensation from the Council. After completion of the share deal, the government allows the firm to do business.

The subsidiary may channel any of its profits not earmarked for reinvestment back to the parent megacorp (appropriate taxes withheld, of course). The share value must reflect any further capitalization. If at any time the parent megacorp wants to sell the subsidiary, or even as little as 10 percent of its assets, it must first obtain written approval from the government.

As the primary shareholder, the president of the subsidiary is held personally responsible for any judgments leveled against "his" company. The firm's creditors may legally approach the president to settle the subsidiary's debts, and the president is legally liable for any criminal activities committed by the subsidiary.

These regulations are designed to prohibit corporate executives from avoiding personal responsibility and accountability by hiding behind the legal construct of the corporation. The president of a megacorp subsidiary operating in the Tir is personally accountable for all actions of that subsidiary, and the Council can legally seize all his property—including all his shares in the subsidiary—if he steps out of line.

>>>>>[Generally speaking it's working. The corps just don't play fast and loose with the law like they do in UCAS and elsewhere.]<<<<<
—Lewis (15:11:02/3-13-54)

>>>>>[What about the extraterritoriality of multinational corporations?]<<<<<
—Gibbons (18:01:15/3-13-54)

>>>>>[No such thing in the Tir, chummer. Anyway, the subsidiaries *aren't* multinationals, are they? They're Tir corps that just happen to be affiliated with a megacorp. The megacorp doesn't own them, not legally—the president of each subsidiary owns it. Twisted but effective, isn't it?]<<<<<
—Lewis (13:03:09/3-15-54)

As head of state, the High Prince can give a megacorp special dispensation in the form of a "Prince's Seal" to operate within the Tir without setting up a special subsidiary. The Council of Princes have no vote in whether or not to award a Prince's Seal, though they can issue a veto. As described elsewhere, a veto on any issue automatically triggers a vote of no-confidence. For this reason, the High Prince never grants a Prince's Seal lightly, and any he does grant are temporary.

In the history of the Tir, princes have issued only three seals, and Kokura Biotechnology Inc. holds the only one currently in effect.

KOKURA BIOTECHNOLOGY INC.

Home Office Location: Kyoto, Japan
Tir Tairngire Division: Salem, Tir Tairngire
President/CEO: Eiji Takamura
Principal Divisions

Division Name: Lotus Eaters Entertainment
Division Head: Akae Henmi
Chief Products/Services: Trideo and simsense productions
Division Name: Kokura Bioengineering
Division Head: Kachiko Ukita
Chief Products/Services: Vat-grown metahuman tissue, bio-replacement technologies, genetic engineering

Business Profile:

A relatively minor player in comparison to most megacorporations, Kokura is many times larger than the most powerful corporation native to the Tir. Kokura's Prince's Seal actually allows only two of the corp's divisions, Lotus Eaters and Kokura Bioengineering, to do business in the Tir.

Lotus Eaters Entertainment works closely with the Tir's government-run entertainment industry, and Kokura Bioengineering is involved in joint ventures with both New Dawn and Genome Technologies Corporation. So far, neither of these joint ventures has borne fruit.

Security/Military Forces: Kokura depends on the Tir's national peace forces to protect its facilities and personnel

>>>>>[Kokura might not have any legbreakers on staff in the Tir, but their Matrix security is drek-hot, as good as anything you'll find in any Seattle data core. When I hit security this tough, I always wonder what it's hiding...Anybody out there got an idea?]<<<<<
—Snowman (16:54:32/3-13-54)

>>>>>[The entertainment side's easy. If you've ever seen TT's state-run trideo, you'll know they need help—it's hurting, big-time. A dozen trid channels—half running documentaries on the environment, the other half showing government propaganda. No gratuitous sex or violence and not a single car chase. Lotus Eaters'll show them how to fix that up.]<<<<<
—Box Watcher (14:39:57/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Officially, Kokura Bioengineering, New Dawn and GTC are working on ways of suppressing the immune response to avoid tissue rejection syndrome with vat-grown replacement parts. *Officially*. So how come none of the Kokura scientists assigned to the Tir facilities are immunologists? They're all gerontologists or mages.]<<<<<
—Faye (17:00:50/3-21-54)

>>>>>["Gerontologists?" he asks dully...]<<<<<
—Barre Sinister (19:13:54/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Scientists who study aging, chummer.]<<<<<
—Trivia Master (21:27:00/3-21-54)

>>>>>[So ka...?]<<<<<
—Yasutoki (00:05:24/3-25-54)

MATSUSHIMA COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES (TIR TAIRNGIRE)

Home Office Location: N.E. Union Ave., Portland
President/CEO: Aiden FitzGerald

Business Profile:

Officially, the MCT office in Portland is a "box-pusher"—it takes orders for MCT products, orders them from the head office, then ships them to the end user. *Un*officially, it's full of corp security types engaged in industrial espionage against NeuroTech and Willamette Compustat...so far with little success.

Security/Military Forces: None

>>>>>[MCT is managing to stay one step ahead of the cops.. at the moment. The smart money says they'll hose up soon, and FitzGerald will get the chop.]<<<<<
—Clarke (12:17:48/3-22-54)

>>>>>[The kid scores again! Aiden FitzGerald is on a protracted vacation funded by the TT taxpayers, the Council has seized all of MCT(TT)'s assets, and MCT international is mad enough to spit venom.]<<<<<
—Clarke (15:19:13/4-1-54)

ARES MACROTECHNOLOGIES (TIR TAIRNGIRE)

Home Office Location: Lancaster Drive, Salem
President/CEO: Walter Dorek

Business Profile:
Currently Ares is working with Willamette University, investigating new manufacturing techniques.

Security/Military Forces: Minimal

>>>>>[I don't know what Ares is up to, but I know they're up to *something*. Sure, Willamette University is on the cutting edge in some disciplines, but *not* in new manufacturing techniques. And we all know that Ares isn't philanthropic enough to put money into helping out an elven university without any hope of a payback..]<<<<<
—Blaster (23:14:06/3-30-54)

>>>>>[I'm with Blaster. By the by, that "minimal" security presence consists of five guards. According to their official records, they're low-salary drones that Ares hired from some work-train program.
So how come I know them? They're all drek-hot street ops with brag sheets as long as my arm. Just what *is* Ares up to?]<<<<<
—Lady Macbeth (05:28:40/4-2-54)

KNIGHT ERRANT (TIR TAIRNGIRE)

Home Office Location: 525 N.W. Couch St., Portland
President/CEO: Martin Roark
Chief Products/Services: Physical security
Business Profile:
A successful private security firm, corporations throughout the Tir contract Knight Errant to protect their facilities. Knight Errant also provides ongoing security for the residents of the Royal Hill area.

Security/Military Forces:
Knight Errant employees are licensed to carry autofire and other anti-personnel weapons while on duty. The corporation may also issue heavy body armor and armored vehicles for specific duties that require such protection. Currently, Knight Errant has about 500 employees in the Portland area.

>>>>>[Legally, KE (TT) is distinct from the KE we all know and *love*. In practice, it might as well be the same crew of militant, obsessive, marginally-incorruptible slots. The crew down here are as good as the boys and girls in Seattle, and the tight restrictions on heavy ordnance make their job even easier.]<<<<<
—Riker (11:03:45/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Let's not forget all those megacorps that *wish* they could get their tentacles into the Tir, like Yamatetsu Corporation. Yamatetsu *used* to be in the Tir, on one of those Prince's Seal things, but they've been having a pretty lousy couple of years. First, almost their entire upper echelon got axed in that purge in Seattle. Then there was the run on one of their research labs and the gratuitous and assorted

flailing that followed. *Then*—just when they thought they were climbing out of the drek—the Tir government caught them in some kind of violation (playing croquet without the appropriate license, maybe?). They got the old heave-ho and lost who knows how many million nuyen in the process. Sometimes you just can't win for losing...]<<<<<
—Paco (20:15:43/4-8-54)

>>>>>[Aztechnology's another one. Unfortunately for the Big A, there's serious bad blood between the Council and Aztlan that spills over into business as well. Easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for Aztechnology to get into TT.]<<<<<
—Pyramid Watcher (12:38 20/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Maybe...but you can bet your hoop Aztechnology's looking for a midget camel and a giant needle...]<<<<<
—Rod (09:34:42/4-11-54)

>>>>>[Saeder-Krupp is another major megacorp that's got no official presence in the Tir, but would kill to have some. I hear they're running some kind of strange "black ops" in the land. If I figure out what, I'll let you know.]<<<<<
—Alchemy (17:33:16/3-3-54)

>>>>>[Wait—Lofwyr's on the Council of Princes, but his company isn't allowed in the country?? What gives??]<<<<<
—Simpson (18:19:29/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Politics, Simpson, pure and simple. As stated earlier, several important people objected to Lofwyr's presence on the Council. The barring of Saeder-Krupp from the Tir was part of the final deal that provided Prince Surehand the votes to get Lofwyr instated.]<<<<<
—Aegis (02:14:41/3-27-54)

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Tir takes pride in its telecommunications network, one of the most sophisticated and reliable in the world. The Tir Tairngire Regional Telecommunications Grid utilizes hardware and software algorithms years, perhaps decades, ahead of the UCAS system. The grid can handle current traffic loads with absolutely none of the switching delay familiar to Seattle telecom users.

>>>>[Hey, lighten up on Seattle, chumley. We've got a good grid. Sure, at peak-load times you often have to wait a few thousand microseconds for the switching nodes to connect your call. And sure, the actual fiber-optic channels are so overloaded and the repeaters so old that you sometimes get digital dropout on broadband network linkups. And sure, the Seattle RTG's so insecure that a high-schooler with a Play School™ deck can hack into the billing subsystem, but...

Hey, it *is* a pretty lousy system after all...]<<<<

—Marcus (13:23:10/2-28-54)

>>>>>[The Tir RTG works so much better than Seattle's for one simple reason—size. Compare the population figures for the *nation* of Tir Tairngire versus the *city* of Seattle. Guess what? They're about the same. Now add the megacorporate data traffic. Now add the entertainment data traffic. Now add the...you get the idea.]<<<<<

—Sir Suave (20:19:54/3-1-54)

The national telecommunications operator, Emerald Telecommunications Inc. (ETI), runs and maintains the RTG and associated local telecom grids, and guarantees a true Orange-5 security standard throughout the Tir "corner" of the network.

>>>>>[Orange-5 is the *lowest* level of security, chummers. Sensitive areas—like those vaunted switching nodes and, of course, the billing routines—are definitely red, with security levels that benchmark right off the end of the scale. ETI claims it uses no black ice and limits its use of gray. In fact, boys and girls, the key switching routines are fragging glaciers—all IC, and much of it black. You have been warned.]<<<<<

—Towkay (04:43:00/2-27-54)

>>>>>[I have to acknowledge that the Tir *does* have a sophisticated telecom grid, but calling it the most sophisticated on the continent is ridiculous. Those who doubt my word should visit the Pueblo Corporate Council Net. The PCC Net is at least half a generation in advance of Tir Tairngire's.]<<<<<

—Acrimonius (01:30:25/3-6-54)

>>>>>[The Tir RTG hides a "grid within a grid" dedicated entirely to government and military communication. Even though it uses the same hardware as the rest of the system, its software protection is *much* tougher. I'd give it a rating of Red-7, and that might be on the low side.]<<<<<

—Ballbuster (00:36:49/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Echo that. A close friend got brain-fried trying to tap into the government grid. The IC is as black as a politician's heart and quite possibly driven by Expert System or even AI technology.]<<<<<

—The Lash (13:43:08/3-9-54)

>>>>>[Like most of the Tir telecommunications net, it benefits from its "fresh" components. Most of today's telecom nets have racks of prime hardware, but are weighted down by elements that are sometimes almost a decade old. The components in the Tir grid are nearly all top line and front edge.]<<<<<

—Cuervo (09:12:13/3-10-54)

The ETI basic service package includes network-based services that generally must be purchased separately in Seattle and elsewhere. Network-based, store-and-forward voice-and-vid mail is standard, as are call forwarding, call waiting, "follow-me," and multi-line support services.

>>>>>[Anybody who uses the network-based voice mail for sensitive biz deserves everything they get. Do you really want your messages sitting in a corp-administered data base until you get around to retrieving them? Give me a break]<<<<<

—Shadow Pixel (13:20:38/3-5-54)

>>>>>[Ditto for the extra-charge scrambler service. Honest to God, who uses these things?]<<<<<

—Neo (16:11:46/3-5-54)

>>>>>[Wannabes, chummer. Wannabe corp players, wannabe shadowrunners. Scary, huh?]<<<<<

—Cat (13 43.33/3-6-54)

ETI clients pay a standard monthly service charge of 44 nuyen per month for a single line. This fee includes all calls within the Tir Tairngire RTG, regardless of duration. Calls to other RTGs carry connect charges.

TIR TAIRNGIRE MATRIX

>>>>>[Okay, chummers. I contracted this section out to a local decker—Console Cowgirl, to be precise. Spes isn't a decker and doesn't hang with deckers. I'm not a true, shred-the-Matrix decker either, so I can't really vouch for the accuracy of this section. Any complaints, take them up with the C girl herself.]<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (16:19:53/2-8-54)

Sparse.

That's the first impression you get of the Tir matrix. It's got fewer and smaller icons, a more sparsely connected paradigm for datalines, and fewer deckers running under the electron skies.

Why? Well, my pets, let me tell you.

First off, the level of paranoia among Tir corps has reached heights that make Seattle's megacorp players seem downright trusting. Most Tir corps maintain *a* system connected to the Matrix, but it's rarely their *main* system. A corp's "satellite system," if we can call it that, gives the corp access to the net—they can scan the data bases, monitor the newsflashes and newsbases, send and receive e-mail and binary transfers, and so on. (Oh yes, they can also send their own corporate Matrix marauders out to do the nasty to a competitor.)

But this satellite system is usually the equivalent of a single high-horsepower microbox sitting on some wageslave's desk. It connects to the Matrix, but it does *not* connect to the corp's full-fledged data core.

Why? Obviously because something not connected to the Matrix can't be raped and violated *from* the Matrix. Hostile deckers have no channel into your system.

Now granted, sometimes a corp's mainframe *must* access the Matrix. That usually happens through a call-out-only mode. The system links with the Matrix—in essence, creating a system access node that didn't exist before—and "squirts" a packet of data out into the Matrix. Then it closes or disables the SAN. If the corp expects any response, it can direct that data to the satellite system or open *another* temporary SAN to receive the data in non-real-time mode.

>>>>>[For you null-heads out there who don't sling the lingo: Non-real-time mode means the SAN connects *only* to a buffer, which stores the incoming data. Only after the main system disables the SAN and severs the connection to the Matrix does it retrieve the data in the buffer. Without a real-time connection, a decker simply can't get from the Matrix into the system.]<<<<<

—The Lash (13:50:59/3-9-54)

>>>>>[True, if I can't real-time it I can't infiltrate my persona into the system, but I've still got options. I can slip an autonomous program frame—preferably disguised as an innocuous data packet—into the buffer, for example. When it gets loaded into the system, it commands the mainframe to open a SAN on the sly and let my persona in that way.]<<<<<

—TS (16:35:54/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Cunning slot...]<<<<<

—The Lash (21:22:36/3-10-54)

Because of all these temporary SANs, the Tir matrix—when viewed from the vicinity of an LTG node, for example—frequently appears to "twinkle" (unlike the Seattle Matrix, which burns with constant lights).

Satellite systems aren't considered important because they're not connected to the main data cores, and so their security levels usually stay low. An average satellite system probably benchmarks at about Blue-3, with some coming in at Orange-1.

Some key corps and other organizations *do* maintain normal Matrix access. Here's a list of some of these systems, with my benchmarks—or wild guesses—of their average security levels. Remember, these are *average*, 'kay? Don't come griping to me if I say a system's Orange-3 and you hit a node that's Red-10. That's not my fault, and I figure you signed on for the risks when you had your datajack installed anyway. End of sermon.

BREHON DATABASE

Security Level: Red-6

Court records, trial transcripts, and numerous other documents from the Tir's judiciary system get stored here. Get inside and you can commute death sentences, arrange ad-libbed paroles, or modify records of prior convictions (but don't miss the

arrest records—they're in the Peace Force Inland Affairs system). Impress your friends, frag your enemies. The construct is a broadsword balanced on its pommel

COUNCIL PERSONAL SYSTEM

Security Level: Gakk!

Yes, the Council of Princes has a sophisticated, parallel array dedicated to its own unwholesome purposes. And yes, the security level is so high I won't even hazard a guess. Call it Red-lots and go pick on something easier, like the National Bank of Dubai or the TT Peace Force Military System. The construct is a circle of eleven stars.

CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION DATABASE

Security Level: Red-9

Want a Visitor's Authorization Visa? Want to kill the records of your last eight attempts to con your way into the Tir? This is the system you want, chummerino. 'Course, knowing that and actually doing something about it are two different things. A small, five-barred gate is the construct.

LOFWYR'S PERSONAL SYSTEM

Security Level: Red-10

Lofwyr the dragon, Prince of Tir Tairngire, keeps his personal system connected to the Matrix. Don't ask me why, or what kind of data he's got on it. I've always followed the old adage, "Never deal with a dragon," and I figure the second half of that reads "and don't slot with his computer." The system's SAN handles a lot of traffic, outgoing and incoming, but traffic analysis doesn't reveal much about what the reptile's up to. The construct is—you guessed it—a dragon.

TELESTRIAN INDUSTRIES CORPORATION

Security Level: Red-6 and up-up-up

This is the central system, the one housed in the third subbasement of the Telestrian Habitat in Portland. Nodes and datafiles dedicated to basic business dealings clock in at about Red-6. Datafiles containing research data benchmark at Red-8 and up. A three-dimensional rendering of the corp's logo, an origami crane, is the construct

>>>>>[Like I said in the economy file, Telestrian subsidiary NeuroTech uses some of the nastiest cascading "smart" IC ever made.]<<<<<
—Red Wraith (01:42:02/4-1-54)

PEACE FORCE INLAND AFFAIRS DATABASE

Security Level: Red-8

The Inland Affairs division of the Peace Force is the local police force. This system handles police records, *not* court records, and the dispatch communication network. The construct is a wooden baton that resembles a knobbed nightstick.

PEACE FORCE MILITARY SYSTEM

Security Level: Red-11

If you think of the military as Keystone Kops with panzers, this system will change your mind in a big way. Drop into the Tir matrix and you can't miss it: Just head for the fragging spiral galaxy that dominates the horizon. It dwarfs every other construct in this corner of the grid, which should tell you something.

If you can hack your way in here, you can presumably access the border security system layout, the current deployment of forces, and plans for any upcoming invasions, and also find out where they keep the wiz hardware. If you make it in and out with your neurons intact, drop me a line.

>>>>>[Hold it! The Council's personal system is tougher than the army's? That doesn't scan.]<<<<<
—Marcus (14:01:12/2-28-54)

>>>>>[C Girl's somewhat misleading on those two systems. The SAN into the Council's system *is* a glacier—Red-10, I'd say, with some nasty black IC—but once you're inside the security slacks off. I'd say the real average level's about Red-6—still nasty, but manageable.]<<<<<
—FastJack (17:12:23/3-1-54)

>>>>>[Maybe for you, FJ. What about the military system?]<<<<<
—Marcus (13:39 05/3-2-54)

>>>>>[It starts out at about Red-10, and if anything, goes *up* from there. If you're looking for a system to cut your teeth on, this ain't it.]<<<<<
—FastJack (14:01:34/3-2-54)

BUREAU OF STANDARDS

Security Level: Red-9

This system administers both the bureaucratic testing section of the Rite of Progression and the certification and testing for job skills and performance. Security's tight, and you can bet Netwatch Matrix cops just swarm around this place. No wonder—a single decker getting in here could conceivably destabilize the entire social structure of the Tir. The construct is a parchment scroll.

>>>>>[Not too likely, C Girl. The system's so compartmentalized—and the compartmentalization comes from hardware architecture, not software—that it would take you forever to slot around with more than a dozen people. (Of course, that wouldn't stop an enterprising decker from modifying her *own* results on the bureaucratic or certification testing...)]<<<<<
—Tallyrand (12:09:57/3-6-54)

WILLAMETTE COMPUSTAT

Security Level: Red-9

The Tir's biggest data-processing firm, WC also conducts extensive software research. Most of the corp's workers "telecommute"—they work at home on their own systems, linked to the data core via the Matrix. This requires WC to maintain several real-time SANs, but all of them are glaciers. The construct is an ivory tower. (Yeah, I know—humor from a corp?)

As a young nation unburdened with historical carryovers, the Tir has the freedom to create a body of law from scratch. Whereas other countries must deal with laws passed by leaders decades or even centuries ago under conditions vastly different from the present, the Tir apparently has no such historical baggage.

>>>>>[You want to check out "historical baggage," go to Britain. According to the lawbooks, it's still punishable by beheading to spit on London Bridge. Of course, the London Bridge the law refers to has been in Arizona (now the Pueblo Corporate Council) since the 1970s.]<<<<<
—The Big Eye (18:26:13/2-19-54)

>>>>>[Not so. The law was taken off the books a few years ago.]<<<<<
—Harker (10:40:43/2-22-54)

As a single nation, rather than a conglomeration of states with separate legal traditions, the Tir has a much more consistent body of laws than does the UCAS. On the negative side, this legal consistency makes for much more stringent enforcement and penalties than in UCAS, without the loopholes and entrenched freedoms commonly accepted across the border.

>>>>>[Translation: the laws in the Tir were engineered to be fragging airtight.]<<<<<
—Legal Beagle (19:03:16/3-2-54)

IMMIGRATION

Tir Tairngire guards its borders jealously. Only a few privileged souls are granted the right to become a subject of the elven nation.

>>>>>[I think this Spes slot is schizo. Sometimes he's slagging the place off, other times he's praising it to the skies. What's the chip-truth here?]<<<<<
—Lancaster (22:02:34/3-5-54)

>>>>>[The chip-truth is that Spes has turned apostate against his country, but his upbringing and early training color his judgment. I understand him well, and I empathize with him.]<<<<<
—Sergei (06:34.38/3-7-54)

>>>>>[Gettin' deep in here...]<<<<<
—Cain (21:37:06/3-11-54)

APPLYING FOR IMMIGRATION

Individuals wishing to become subjects of Tir Tairngire must apply from outside the nation. Even if they already reside in the country, on a work or student visa, for example, they must leave the Tir long enough to file their application and receive a reply. This requirement prevents would-be immigrants from getting work visas, then rolling them over into immigrant status from within the country's borders.

To be considered for immigration, applicants must have a reasonable level of financial security. A job within the Tir, or sufficient net worth to support the applicant for at least five years at 20 percent above the poverty line, meets this requirement. At present, the official poverty line stands at 38,500 nuyen per year, which means net worth immigrants must guarantee an annual income of 46,200 nuyen. To qualify as a net worth immigrant, an applicant must move all of his assets (or symbols or certificates thereof, such as stock certificates) into the nation. Once inside the Tir, these assets are subject to the capital conservation laws discussed later in this section.

>>>>>[In other words, once the cred's in the country, it's frogging tough to get it back out again.]<<<<<
—Sol III (19:05:32/2-23-54)

Most net worth applicants use the money they bring into the nation to start their own businesses. New immigrants have founded some of the Tir's most vibrant small businesses, adding significant wealth to the nation's economy.

To qualify for immigration on the basis of employment, an applicant must have a guaranteed job with a registered Tir Tairngire corporation. The corporation must furnish documentary evidence to the immigration department that no subject currently living in Tir Tairngire has the necessary skill set to fill the job.

>>>>>[Oh, yes, protecting the national labor force from unfair outside competition, I've heard that drek before. Some of the Native American Nations have this kind of provision, but it's just a rubber stamp.]<<<<<
—Kraken (10:35:07/3-12-54)

>>>>>[Not in this case, I can assure you. The Immigration boys and girls *check* the documentary evidence, and if the facts don't support it, they'll come back to the issuing corporation with some hard questions. Note that filing a fraudulent "statement of non-competition"—that's the official name for this drek—can net a corp a fine of 120,000¥. No, Kraken, everyone takes this very seriously.]<<<<<
—Nancy B (19:12:40/3-14-54)

The chief executive of the company hiring the applicant takes legal responsibility for that applicant's behavior for 12 months after immigration. If the applicant commits a felony within Tir Tairngire during that year, the sponsoring executive suffers the same penalty as the applicant.

>>>>>[Hoo boy! Can you imagine the prez of Yamatetsu-Seattle, for example, getting tossed in the slammer because some database clerk deals BTL on the side?]<<<<<
—LAX (19:31:37/3-11-54)

>>>>>[That's why corps are very careful who they sponsor for immigration...]<<<<<
—Nasty (17:26:00/3-13-54)

These solvency requirements, net worth or guaranteed employment, are minimum conditions for immigration. Meeting them does not necessarily mean that the Immigration department *must* approve the application. The applicant must also furnish the Immigration department with a photograph, a retinal scan, information on all transimplant or personal enhancement technology, and copies of all personal records, along with notarized approval to release those records to Tir investigators for confirmation.

>>>>>[You've got to tender the same drek if you're applying for a VAV. Note that personal records include medical, military and criminal (if applicable).]<<<<<
—Legal Beagle (19:23:21/3-2-54)

The Immigration department can reject an applicant based on any facet of the application. The law provides no recourse for appeal, and the department need not explain its rejection of any application

>>>>>[Which gives the Tir perfect freedom to nix you just because you're not an elf.]<<<<<
—Boingo (23:19:40/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Unfortunately, you are all too correct.]<<<<<
—Spes (17:43:51/3-5-54)

>>>>>[Remember that even after you're accepted for immigration, you're not a full subject until you've gone through the Rite of Progression. You're a probationary subject—a "proby"—with a social rank of Gentry.]<<<<<
—Wyoh (04:27:39/3-10-54)

If one member of a married couple receives approval for immigration, his or her spouse may also enter the country. However, the spouse *must* immigrate at the same time as the applicant. Once within the Tir, a subject *cannot* sponsor immediate family or anyone else for immigration. Family members must make their own applications, to be accepted or rejected on their own merits. A Tir subject *can* deed an applicant a portion of his or her assets, which then legally belong to the applicant for the purpose of adjudicating a net worth application

Personal Invitation

The High Prince can invite any individual, from anywhere in the world, to become a probationary subject of the Tir. Such an invitation bypasses the complexities of immigration law; the Immigration department cannot bar an individual so favored from entering the country.

Many influential artists and others whose presence benefits the nation but who failed to qualify for immigration under the standard laws gained access to the Tir via this royal fiat. High Prince Surehand used this fiat much more frequently in the nation's early years than he does today. Over the last four years, he has extended his invitation to only 30 individuals, usually incorporating the invitations into the Royal Birthday festivities.

Princes on the Council and others of Royal rank can and do petition the High Prince to extend an invitation to those they would like to bring into the country. If Surehand sees some personal benefit in it (for example, if it would place a rival under an obligation to him) he may acquiesce. Though the Council of Princes can veto an invitation, they rarely do so.

WORK VISAS

The law allows for temporary work visas, though they are only granted in exceptional circumstances. The application process for a temporary work visa, like that for immigration, must begin outside the country. The applicant must supply all the same documentation, personal and employment records and so on, and the sponsoring company must file the same statement of non-competition. However, the chief executive of the hiring company is *not* personally responsible for the behavior of an applicant for a work visa.

Work visas are issued for a specific, limited time period, ranging from three months to two years. Work visas can only be renewed once, and the applicant must leave the nation during the processing period.

The recipient of a work visa receives documentation very much like a VAV, and must carry it at all times. The worker pays all tax withholdings at source, but no other national or municipal taxes; therefore, he receives none of the social benefits enjoyed by subjects.

>>>>>[Strictly speaking, that includes medical benefits. In most cases, however, the company pays the worker's MSP premiums.]<<<<<

—Doc Dicer (09:30:53/3-10-54)

The guest worker has no social rank, and is not considered a true member of Tir Tairngire society.

>>>>>[Actually, you get a special social rank one step lower than everybody else—*goro*, outsider.]<<<<<

—Renard (23:25:09/3-1-54)

As with immigration applications, the Immigration department may reject any work visa application, without explanation and without appeal.

>>>>>[Work visas aren't common. Not because the Immigration department won't issue them, but because not many people apply for them. Trust me, living in the Tir as a *goro* is no fun. You know how *gaijin* ("foreign devils") are looked down on in Japan? *Goro* get the same treatment in the Tir, but it's blatant. The Japanese are at least marginally polite. Not so the elves of the Tir.

Visa workers usually get corp-assigned accommodation, on the grounds of the corp facility. If you can manage it, I strongly recommend staying within the compound. Going outside will only give you grief.]<<<<<

—Fiann (20:32:37/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Nothing like a friendly fistfight with the locals in a tavern to get them to respect you as a person.]<<<<<

—Raiko (21:43:35/3-2-54)

>>>>>[From that comment, I assume you've worked in some of the Native American Nations, right, Raiko? Well if you're talking about Sioux or even Algonkian-Manitou, you're right. In those places, the physical hostility toward outsiders is a kind of test. If you don't knuckle under, if you give as good as you get, you've proved yourself worthy of their respect and friendship.

That just ain't so in the Tir, chummer. You don't get the young wolves in the bar showing their teeth, daring the stranger to back down. The hostility's more pervasive than that. Everyone considers you less than human, and they let you know it in subtle ways. Patronizing attitude, snide comments pitched just loud enough to be overheard...and if you call them on it, they'll just sneer down their noses at you. If you choose the hard option and beat some respect into them, you'll do time in jail.

That's true even for elven foreigners. Non-elves just get a worse case of the same drek. Remember what they call non-elves in the Tir: *celén*, unevolved one. That just about says it all.]<<<<<

—Fiann (21:46:36/3-2-54)

>>>>>[You're talking about the Tir elves here, right? Don't the non-elf subjects act different?]<<<<<

—Sammy (21:47:51/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Not too many of them, not so you'd notice. They've got caught up in the same elitist Tir attitude.]<<<<<

—Fiann (21.49:30/3-2-54)

>>>>>[I'll echo that. If you're a *goro* looking for respect, there's only one way to get it. Jander by the hang-out of one of the few go-gangs, insult the leader's slitch, and then win the ensuing brawl. If you live, you've probably got some chummers.]<<<<<

—Hog (18:09:54/3-5-54)

STUDENT VISAS

The Tir has several universities known and respected around the world. Willamette in Salem, the University of Tir Tairngire (UTT) in Eugene (originally University of Oregon), and *Celisté* ("Bringer of Light") in Corvalis (originally Oregon State University), attract students from other countries who come to the Tir under the nation's well-developed student visa program.

In order to get a student visa, the applicant must be accepted

at one of the Tir's universities for the upcoming semester. Once accepted, the student must submit the same documentation as for work visas or full immigration, and must apply from outside the nation. Once a student receives a visa, he or she can renew it from within the Tir for as long as it takes the student to obtain his or her degree. The student visa application must specify the degree sought. Students may remain in the Tir between semesters, but may only work in university-sponsored "work practicum" programs. Once the student has obtained a degree, he or she must leave the nation immediately after graduation. Graduates may reapply for admission on another basis, of course, and the Immigration department regards a degree from a Tir university as a definite point in the applicant's favor.

Student visa applications receive fewer rejections than any other type of application, as long as the applicant has already been accepted by the university of his or her choice.

>>>>>[And as long as he's an elf.]<<<<<
—Dori (10:16.09/2-26-54)

>>>>>[Not so. Metatype makes *less* difference on a student visa application than on any other kind.]<<<<<
—Priam (16:42:40/2-27-54)

>>>>>[Yeah, but.. your chances of getting accepted to a Tir university are *much* higher if you're an elf, and that's the chip-truth. And since university acceptance is a prerequisite for a student visa, there's less opportunity to tube an application on racial grounds (if that makes any sense).]<<<<<
—Dori (11:18:53/3-1-54)

>>>>>[It's no easy matter getting accepted even if you *are* an elf. Competition for admission gets *real* tough. You've got to have a drek-hot grade point average and top SAT (or equivalent) scores, or some pretty impressive work experience. You've got to convince the faculty that you're dying to study there, via an on-line, conference interview, and convince the finance department that you can pay the tab. Tuition for a single semester varies depending on the faculty and program, but it averages around 18,000¥. And foreign students get *no* scholarships or bursaries.

Of course, if you *can* get in, it's definitely worth your while. Willamette has one of the best biogenetic engineering graduate programs in the world, while UTT's degree in theoretical and applied thaumaturgy rivals MITM.]<<<<<
—Parnall (10:26:58/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Like, who gives a frag?]<<<<<
—Tober (23:48:25/3-5-54)

>>>>>[Like, *you* should, drekhead. I know a couple of runners got into the Tir under student visas. (God knows how they scammed the admissions office at Willamette, but they did it.) Now they're paying some egghead kids to attend classes for them via the Matrix, while they explore the darker and more lucrative nooks and crannies of Salem. Who knows, they may even come out of it with advanced degrees...]<<<<<
—Ratskeller (20.29:01/3-6-54)

>>>>>[That point's worth hitting again. If you get in on a student visa, *yes*, you *have* to attend classes, if only on-line. If you don't, the law considers you "in default," and infringing on Tir immigration law brings some nasty punishments. By law, if you stop attending classes you have to notify the Immigration department, who'll immediately terminate your visa. Once that happens, you'd better get out of Dodge ASA fragging P.]<<<<<
—Parnall (11:12:43/3-7-54)

VISITOR'S VISA

Travelers to the Tir may also apply for a 30-day Visitor's Authorization Visa. As with other Tir visas, all applicants must apply from outside the nation, either at the nearest Tir Tairngire consulate or <<**block delete: 7.2 Kp**>>

>>>>>[Awright, awright, we've been over all this before. This is the dreaded VAV discussed in the first file. Refer to that section for official details; for the unofficial jazz, keep reading.]<<<<<
— Captain Chaos (20:35:23/2-8-54)

>>>>>[Especially remember one important fact mentioned in that first file. If a Peace Force officer asks you for your VAV documentation—which they do whenever they feel like it just because it makes them feel superior—and you can't present it, you've committed a serious crime.]<<<<<
—Spider (16:53 36/2-17-54)

>>>>>[Specifically, a felony, with a maximum penalty of 10 years in the slammer. Few people get the full 10 years, though: they're usually fined slightly more than they can pay, worked over by goons with stun batons, and ejected from the Tir.

The Peace Force sometimes exhibits a nasty sense of humor. They can pick which border they're going to dump you over, and they tend to select the one belonging to a nation where you're already *persona non grata*. And oh yes, they'll frequently tell your new hosts what time to expect your arrival.]<<<<<
—Legal Beagle (21:47:23/2 22-54)

>>>>>[Ouch...]<<<<<
—Longlegs (23 10.08/2-22-54)

LEAVING THE COUNTRY

Those subjects wishing to leave the country, temporarily or permanently, are often surprised to run into the Tir's stringent restrictions on those actions

TRAVEL

People of Comital social rank or lower must officially request a travel visa from the Immigration department. As part of the application, they must disclose their purpose for traveling abroad, their destination, and details about any business they intend to do outside the nation. The act of submitting an application authorizes the Immigration department to confirm all stated facts through appropriate channels. The process takes two to three weeks, and most requests receive approval. Subjects of Ducal or Royal rank need no such travel authorization.

Anyone leaving the Tir must show his or her credstick to the Peace Force detachment at the border crossing. This credstick must either contain the required travel authorization or proof of the holder's Ducal or Royal social rank. Acquiring visas or other documentation required by the destination country remains the traveler's responsibility.

>>>>>[The Tir's uptight about bringing stuff back from your travels. Before you go abroad, I'd strongly advise getting the current Traveler's Advisory from the Customs thugs.]<<<<<
—Yavin (11:06:25/3-9-54)

Officially, travelers can carry with them only 3,500 nuyen of currency, monetary instruments, or anything considered "trade goods." This limit prevents people from using a so-called vacation to emigrate, and carrying their assets with them. In practice, this restriction affects few people, because most Tir subjects manage their money entirely on credit. Note that the Tir's capital conservation laws, discussed below, apply to temporary travelers as well as to emigrants. Tir Tairngire banks will not authorize credit transactions that contravene those laws.

>>>>>[So keep close track of how much you spend on vacation, my little elves, or you might find yourself cut off from your funds.]<<<<<
—Dack (11:11:36/2-18-54)

EMIGRATION

People wishing to emigrate from the Tir, regardless of social rank, must notify the Immigration department at least two months before their intended date of departure. Emigrés of Royal rank must also notify the Council of Princes (a meaningless formality). Within three weeks of receiving official notification, the Immigration department issues a Certificate of Emigration, enabling the emigré to cross the border and to transfer credit from a Tir Tairngire bank to a foreign financial institution. This application is a pure formality, and the Immigration department never denies a certificate.

>>>>>[*Wrongo*, Spes old chummer. The Tir *does* sometimes refuse to let people leave the dandelion-eaters' paradise. Not often, I'll admit, but it does happen.]<<<<<
—Nick (16:32:42/2-21-54)

As part of the application, the emigrant specifies his date of departure from the nation. At midnight on that day, he loses his status as a subject. If he wishes to re-enter the Tir for any purpose, he must follow the same procedures as any other visitor or would-be immigrant.

Capital Conservation

In theory, the capital conservation laws prevent disruption of the Tir's economy through the removal of large amounts of capital by emigrants.

>>>>>["In theory" being the key phrase. The laws are really just the government's way of gouging anyone who wants to leave.]<<<<<
—Audrey (22.11:34/2-26-54)

Unless a prospective emigrant can prove extenuating circumstances to the Department of Finance, he may not take more than 55,000 nuyen out of the country in any one year. This restriction applies to currency, credit, monetary instruments, and many other assets.

Several specific exceptions to the limit do exist. Each emigrating family may take one car or other vehicle, as well as the proceeds of the sale of their primary residence in the Tir. The owner of a business may take 50 percent of the proceeds of the sale of that business, and the balance of the sale one year after his emigration. None of these assets count against the 55,000 nuyen limit.

Emigrés must negotiate other extenuating circumstances privately with the Department of Finance. The department need not accept *any* request for exclusion.

>>>>>[That's coercive and repressive. Restraint of trade.]<<<<<
—Plutocrat (12:06:53/2-24-54)

>>>>>[Yes. Alas, it is also the law.]<<<<<
—Spes (20:16:36/2-24-54)

>>>>>[My great-grandmother told me about the time she tried to emigrate from England to Canada back in 1969. The British Labor government had the same kind of restrictions on taking money out of the country. Emigrants had to leave most of their assets in Britain, preferably in a bank so the Labor slots could tax the interest. She wasn't rich but she wasn't hurting either, and her total tax rate came to *95 percent*. That's right: one for you, *nineteen* for the government.]<<<<<
—Reiter (10:28:12/2-26-54)

CRIMINAL LAW

Criminal matters are adjudicated by professional jurists referred to as *brehons*, after the Gaelic tradition. A *brehon*, more

commonly called a magistrate In recent years, is appointed by the Council of Princes and must hold the social rank of Noble or better. (If an otherwise well-qualified candidate lacks sufficient rank, the Council may petition the High Prince to promote the candidate by fiat.) Upon nomination, each magistrate receives a one-hectare grant of land, usually within the magistrate's jurisdiction. To be considered a viable candidate, an individual must have extensive legal training and experience, either within the Tir or in a similar system, and must have a sterling reputation within the legal community. A magistrate may hold office for a maximum of 50 years, unless he or she chooses to step down or the Council of Princes removes him from office prior to the end of the term.

>>>>>[*Fifty fragging years!* You can tell we're dealing with elves here.]<<<<<
—Trebor (13:23:12/3-2-54)

>>>>>[All magistrates are elves. A couple of human jurists out in hoopfrag—Hell's Canyon or some misbegotten hole like that—are agitating to get themselves nominated. So far, the Council of Princes has ignored them.]<<<<<
—Legal Beagle (21:45 04/3-7-54)

By law, each riding within Tir Tairngire must have at least three magistrates. Beyond that minimum, the riding's population determines the actual number. For example, the sparsely settled Wallowa riding has only seven magistrates, whereas Portland riding has over 200. Each magistrate has jurisdiction only within his or her own riding.

>>>>>[In case you're thinking about bribing a magistrate, consider this. A magistrate gets an annual salary of at least 180,000¥, and senior magistrates make even more. You'd better offer one big bribe to warrant risking that kind of salary for the next 50 years. I'm not saying it can't be done, or even advising you against trying. But understand the financial situation before you get yourself in too deep.]<<<<<
—Effingel (22:47:41/3-4-54)

The legal system in the Tir does not follow the adversarial paradigm familiar to UCAS citizens (and watchers of UCAS-based trideo crime dramas). A Tir magistrate is not regarded as an Olympian, truly objective arbiter, as are UCAS judges; in fact, the Tir system recognizes the impossibility of such a task. Instead, the magistrate becomes an active participant in the search for the truth.

>>>>>[Sounds like the Napoleonic code still used in France and elsewhere.]<<<<<
—Markie (13:45:35/3-15-54)

>>>>>[It's even more refined and elegant than that. And I don't mean "refined" and "elegant" in any flouncy, effete way. The system works smoothly—much more so than the kluged-together system we use in Seattle.]<<<<<
—Legal Beagle (19:37:28/3-16-54)

In a criminal trial, up to three "prosecuting attorneys" represent the state. (To avoid lengthy, arcane explanations, I have used the UCAS terms throughout this section, even though they do not strictly apply). A "defense attorney" may represent the defendant though the law does not require it; the defendant may and often does defend himself. The proper term for the prosecutor is *aishar*, and for the defense attorney, *ehlios*. Unlike *brehon*, these words come not from Gaelic, but Sperethiel. Respectively, they mean 'he who looks for the truth' and 'arguer for the accused.'

>>>>>[What if the poor slot can't afford a mouthpiece?]<<<<<
—Kark (23:00:04/3-1-54)

>>>>>[That's not an issue in the Tir system. Because the magistrate is an active participant and not a detached arbiter, he can help the defendant out if the poor skag looks like he's getting screwed. Alternatively, of course, the magistrate can sit back and let the screwing continue, or join in and turn it into a gang-bang.]<<<<<
—Norman (12:51:33/3-6-54)

>>>>>[If I ever get in trouble in the Tir, I've got to buy me the *brehon*!!]<<<<<
—Polly (15:32:31/3-8-54)

>>>>>[A magistrate *is* a good purchase if you can afford one, but check my comments of 3-4-53 above.]<<<<<
—Effingel (23:01:16/3-10-54)

The magistrate controls the pacing and length of the trial, and has considerable latitude in deciding what to admit as evidence. He also has the right and the responsibility to question witnesses.

Jury trials do not exist in Tir Tairngire; instead the presiding magistrate passes final judgment. Unlike judges in the UCAS, magistrates are not constrained by precedents and case law. Though a magistrate will frequently research precedents for a particularly thorny case, the law does not oblige him to, and he may rule as he sees fit regardless of previous cases on the books. Because they know that their decisions will not necessarily set a precedent for future cases, magistrates have much more freedom to rule on the specifics of a particular case without making sweeping generalizations. As well as ruling on the guilt or innocence of the accused, the magistrate chooses the appropriate punishment. The law lists a range of suggested penalties for each classification of offense, but individual magistrates may make their own decisions.

>>>>>[So what's the story here? Are you innocent until proved guilty, or guilty until proved innocent?]<<<<<
—MacCool (14:10:48/2-14-54)

>>>>>[That's a meaningless question, because the legal system isn't adversarial. The magistrate, the prosecutor(s) and the defense attorneys (or the defendant himself) work together to find the truth, to determine "reality." The magistrate will keep on digging until he gets to what he considers the truth, so the concepts of reasonable doubt or presumed innocence fly right out the window.]<<<<<
—De Jure (13:02:10/2-16-54)

>>>>>[Another key point: many (but not all) magistrates are reasonably talented mages, and don't hesitate to use magic in the courtroom if they figure it'll help get at the truth. Nobody makes a stink about that like they would in Seattle: most people welcome it. Except the criminals, of course, but the Tir tends not to listen to their whining. The magistrate often uses magic to probe a witness's mind and confirm the truth of his statements, or anything else that'll cut through the bulldrek.]<<<<<

—Randi (11:45 26/2-18-54)

>>>>>[For important cases, you can count on powerful magics being used.]<<<<<

—Aegis (19:13.50/3-10-54)

If the defendant believes he has been wrongly convicted, he may apply for appeal to his riding's judiciary committee. This committee comprises all magistrates in the riding. Each magistrate reviews the application on his personal computer system, and electronically registers approval or rejection. (In the larger ridings, a member of the magistrate's staff often judges the application, depending on the particulars of the appeal.) If a simple majority of magistrates agree that an appeal has merit, they convene a committee of appeal comprising three, five, or seven local magistrates. The judiciary committee selects the number of committee members, generally basing the size on the severity of the offense. The magistrate who made the original decision may not serve on the committee of appeal. Once convened, the committee hears the case again, using a procedure similar to the original trial. A simple majority decision either confirms or overturns the original ruling, and the committee's decision cannot be reversed through subsequent appeals. The High Prince may legally overturn any criminal ruling by fiat, but almost never does so.

The appeal process handles cases in a timely manner, mainly because so few appeals actually reach the committee of appeal stage. In general, the committee makes its decision within a week of the defendant's filing of application for appeal.

>>>>>[Compare that to the two-year-plus wait for the Seattle courts of appeal...]<<<<<

—Legal Beagle (19:45:00/3-16-54)

>>>>>[Yeah, but the system's flaky. Whatever happened to having twelve good men and true decide who's got the better lawyer?]<<<<<

—Kali (14:32:24/3-18-54)

>>>>>[That kind of efficiency goes beyond the appeal process. In most cases, the time between getting arrested and actually going to trial is less than two weeks. Which is just as well, because Tir law doesn't include bail. You get arrested and you stay in jail until you're acquitted.]<<<<<

—De Jure (13:18:27/3-21-54)

>>>>>[I've put together a quick overview of the average penalties for common classes of infraction. Remember that Magistrates have a lot of leeway in assigning whatever penalty they see fit. I'm using the standard layout other people have used elsewhere on Shadowland. Following the tables and basic notes, I'll discuss some crimes and punishments specific to the Tir.

WEAPON FINES AND PUNISHMENT TABLE

Weapon Type	Offense and Fine/Imprisonment			
	1	2	3	4
	Possession	Transport	Threat	Use
(A) Small Bladed Weapon	—	—	9,000¥	22,000¥/6 mo
(B) Large Bladed Weapon	—	2,250¥	12,000¥	25,000¥/8 mo
(C) Blunt Weapon	—	—	10,000¥	22,000¥/8 mo
(D) Projectile Weapon	—	—*	12,000¥	25,000¥/8 mo
(E) Pistol	10,000¥/6 mo	12,000¥/8 mo	22,000¥/1 yr	44,000¥/1 yr
(F) Rifle	10,000¥/6 mo*	15,000¥/8 mo*	35,000¥/1 yr	60,000¥/1 yr
(G) Automatic Weapon	22,000¥/1 yr	44,000¥/1 yr	3 yrs	4 yrs
(H) Heavy Weapon	2 yrs	3 yrs	5 yrs	10 yrs
(I) Explosives	1 yr	1 yr	5 yrs	15 yrs
(J) Military Weapons	5 yrs	5 yrs	15 yrs	25 yrs
(K) Military Armor	12,000¥/2 yrs	—	—	—
(L) Ammunition	12,000¥	—	—	—
(CA) Class A Cyberware	44,000¥	—	—	—
(CB) Class B Cyberware	35,000¥	—	—	—
(CC) Class C Cyberware	120,000¥/3 yrs	—	—	—
(CD) Unlicensed Cyberdecks	**60,000¥/2 yrs (minimum)	—	—	—

* Assuming hunting use

** See below

Controlled Weapons and Equipment

Note that no separate category for "Intent" appears on the above chart. Intent goes under "Use," based on the enlightened attitude that if you used it you *intended* to use it. (Only in the UCAS do you get the brainless sophistry that distinguishes intent from use. "Yes, judge, I shot the drek out of him with an assault cannon, but I didn't intend to hurt him, just scare him. Matter of fact, he looked pretty fragging scared before his head came off." Yeah, right.)

You can get a license for any weapon that might reasonably be used for hunting. (The key word is "reasonably:" don't try to get a hunting license for your shiny new minigun, 'kay?) That makes possession and transport between your home and a *reasonable* (there's that word again) hunting area legal. (A hurling game does *not* qualify.)

Cyberware

If you're coming into the Tir on a visa, don't worry about licensing your cyberware. Your visa application requires you to list all cyberware and enhancements (and the guards will check the truth of your application at the border). If the Tir doesn't like what you've got installed, you won't get in. If you sneak in and get grabbed, you'll be fined for illegal c-ware. If you get bodmods installed in the Tir, you've got to get them registered and licensed As with visas, the government need not grant any request for a license They might let you get your eyes replaced, but they won't look kindly on your installing an SMG in your cyberarm

Cyberdecks

You *must* license any cyberdeck with the Customs department when you enter the nation, or if you pick one up inside. The license doesn't cost much—about 50¥ at last check—but the licensing process guarantees that your chipset leaves the right "audit trace" every time you access the Matrix. A deck with a stealth chipset—one without the trace—is automatically considered unlicensed. Possession of a stealth chipset gets you the same penalty as carrying an unlicensed deck

Dealing

Dealing or trading in restricted technology or equipment nets you fines about 4 times as high as what you'd pay for straight possession, and a jail term running up to 20 years. This ain't the place to run guns, chummer, if you can possibly avoid it

Addictives

A good catch all term for chips like BTL. (Refer to comments in the overview file for the Tir's definition of BTL. it's probably not what you're used to.) Possession for personal use nets you fines ranging from 6,000¥ for simple stuff up to 100,000¥ for something like 2XS. Dealing BTL carries fines two to four times those for simple possession, and you'll go to jail for anywhere from 2 to 25 years

Civil Security

If you hadn't guessed, the Tir's strict about what they call civil security. They consider any action with the potential to harm the government or the society treason. The Council of Princes hears treason cases, rather than a magistrate, with the High Prince chairing. The decision in a treason trial is final, no system for appeal exists. The penalty for treason ranges from 50 years in jail to death (And note that the definition of "treason" is so broad that the Princes can add civil insurrection or even low-level civil disobedience to that classification as they see fit Theoretically, getting zeroed—illegally wiping your identity and SIN from the databanks—could be considered treason. Be warned.)

Border Infractions

This means trying to slip the border and getting caught Officially speaking, if the Peace Force wants to bother, they can put you on trial for this offense. If convicted, look forward to an average of ten years in jail. Some poor sod got executed for his fifth (failed) attempt to run the border, so take that first figure with a grain of salt

Most of the time, the Peace Force border contingent'll just work

you over, hit you with a dose of *laés*— a real wiz memory-erasing drug—and dump you somewhere outside the Tir border.

That's if the Peace Force grabs you—which means you got lucky. The alternatives are worse.

There're a lot of paranimals patrolling the border, and usually a few free spirits. These critters eat intruders as a matter of course. And then there's always a chance of running into the Hunt—Ehran's little "paladins," as Spes explained earlier. They tend to geek first and never even get around to the questions.]<<<<<

—Legal Beagle (16:37 27/3-25-54)

>>>>>[Hey, let's get back to that *laés* stuff. What is it, how effective is it, and where can I get some?]<<<<<

—Thumper (21:09:28/3-27-54)

>>>>>[I don't know the formula (though I can make a good guess). My information says it came out of a cutting-edge research lab at Willamette a decade or so back. It's usually injected subdermally in a single (human-size) dose of about 50 micrograms. (Yes, Virginia, that means you could probably use it in a tranq dart, though the standard application uses a slap-hypo.)

The effect is a retrograde amnesia that wipes out memories recorded over the last few hours. Its secondary effect knocks you out for maybe an hour or two. As far as I know, you can't get back the time you forgot through hypnotism or magic. The stuff physically changes the potential gradients of various chemicals in some neurons, and the memories are just plain *gone*.

As for where you can get it, your guess is as good as mine, chummer. Steal it from the border detachment? Penetrate Willamette? You might find some on the shadow market, but it'll probably cost you more than you want to pay.]<<<<<

—Doctor Jekyll (14 43.04/3-29-54)

>>>>>[Oh yeah, I knew there was something else. Parole.

Doesn't exist, chummers. If the friendly neighborhood magistrate says you go to jail for 10 years, you stay in jail for 10 years to the day. No time off for good behavior, no work furlough program, no compassionate release, no conjugal visits; none of those pansy "advances" in penal science we see in Seattle. Jail isn't for rehabilitation, not in the Tir; it's for punishment, and for keeping people off the streets.]<<<<<

—Legal Beagle (17:33:20/3-29-54)

CIVIL LAW

The subjects of Tir Tairngire appear far less litigious than residents of the UCAS. In the UCAS, especially in Seattle, people seem to sue each other at the drop of a hat, spending vast sums of money to settle in the courts what reasonable people could settle through personal discussion. To discourage this kind of foolishness, both parties to any lawsuit must share the court costs according to each party's ability to pay. Thus, a wageslave suing a corporation for wrongful dismissal would pay little; the corporation would pick up most of the bill.

Any party wishing to file a lawsuit must present an application to do so to a magistrate in his riding. If the magistrate considers the suit warranted, all parties progress to the next step. If not, he denies the application for lawsuit, and fines the applicant between 2,000 nuyen and 10,000 nuyen for wasting the magistrate's time.

>>>>>[A great way of avoiding nuisance suits...]<<<<<

—Word (11:49.23/3-10-54)

If the magistrate considers the application warranted, he sets a court date, on which both parties must appear. Lawyers represent each party *only if* both agree to representation; otherwise, the parties represent themselves. If one of the parties is a corporation, the chief executive is named the official correspondent; however, he or she can send a proxy. The actual trial resembles a criminal trial: the magistrate participates in reaching the truth, then makes a decision. Neither party may appeal a civil suit. The parties involved must pay all court costs, divided as discussed above (unless one party pays all court costs as part of the settlement).

>>>>>[Lawsuits ain't cheap. Court costs generally run about 2,000¥ a day, with a one-day minimum. And that doesn't include the cost of legal counsel if you take that option.]<<<<<

—Marlee (14.53 48/3-9-54)

An Arbitration Council settles most disagreements between private individuals out of court. Each party in the disagreement nominates three people (not relatives) to sit on an Arbitration Council. These six people then select a seventh to chair the council. Both parties present their arguments, and the council makes a decision using a secret ballot. The decision of the council does not legally bind either party, but a tradition of accepting and abiding by the decision has almost the force of law.

ANCIENT TRADITIONS

Tir Tairngire society established several "ancient traditions" that most people follow as though they carry the weight of law: compensation, vouchsafe, and challenge. These traditions are *not*

laws, but no one may break them with impunity; the more "civilized" Tir subjects scorn anyone who refuses to abide by the traditions. Typically, those of Ducal and Royal rank abide by the ancient traditions as rigidly as they adhere to immutable laws.

>>>>>[Just hold it a minute here. Where are these "ancient" traditions coming from, for frag's sake? The Tir's been around for 18 years, and the metatype that founded it has only existed for *42* years. How "ancient" can Tir or elvish traditions be?]<<<<<

—Hardesty (12:05:17/2-18-54)

>>>>>[The way I read it, these "ancient traditions" are like the rituals of Freemasonry, based on rites that really did exist thousands of years ago. Despite what the Masons and the elves like to believe, of course, they cannot simply establish continuity of tradition. The main point is to "borrow" respect from antiquity.]<<<<<

—Rafe (09:31:03/2-21-54)

>>>>>[The Princes don't agree with your theory.]<<<<<

—Camber (17:08.42/2-21-54)

>>>>>[Would you expect them to admit it's a scam?]<<<<<

—Rafe (08.49:06/2-22-54)

COMPENSATION

The tradition of compensation states that if an individual harms another in any way—financially, through damage or destruction of property, or in reputation—the harmed party may ask for compensation. The two parties together must determine the amount and type of compensation.

Strictly speaking, asking for compensation constitutes a breach of etiquette. The party who inflicted the harm should recognize his or her responsibility and offer suitable compensation without a request. Etiquette requires the harmed party to accept the compensation offered without negotiation, or—more graciously—waive compensation entirely.

>>>>>[That's drek. If I hurt you, what possible incentive would I have for paying you?]<<<<<

—Lockhart (14:21:26/3-3-54)

>>>>>[Obviously, you lack any concept of honorable behavior, Lockhart. If you harm me, and fail to offer compensation—or *adequate* compensation—you will know it, and I will know it. The simple knowledge that you are not acting honorably should be enough to prompt the correct behavior.

Further, of course, our friends and acquaintances know the situation. They know that you acted shabbily, against the standards of the traditions, and they will think less of you. For any civilized person, surely that is punishment and incentive enough.]<<<<<

—Spes (20:17:26/3-3-54)

>>>>>[The offering and waiving of compensation represents a subtle art. Say I insult you, damaging your reputation. I then publicly admit responsibility for the damage and offer you compensation: in the sum of 1¥, which is what I'm implying your reputation's worth. Very urbane character assassination. It's a tough balancing act, though, because others have to agree with my assassination of your character, otherwise I'm compromising my own stature by offering inadequate compensation. (You, of course, would probably waive compensation, perhaps implying in some way that paying the 1¥ might harm my financial stability, or something like that. And battle is joined.)]<<<<<

—Topper (22:12:47/3-6-54)

VOUCHSAFE

The tradition of vouchsafe allows someone to vouch for the good conduct of another—with his life, if necessary. When someone swears vouchsafe for another, the one who gave the oath takes complete responsibility for the actions of the other, and suffers the same consequences if that person acts improperly. The consequences might range from public scorn (if the person vouched for behaves rudely) to death, if he commits treason. When offering the oath, the swearer usually specifies or implies a limit, for example, "while within the High Prince's palace," or "as long as the person remains within the Tir." It is considered ill-mannered to refuse to accept vouchsafe.

>>>>>[The business about a corp's CEO being responsible for anyone coming in under a work visa—that's an example of institutional vouchsafe, isn't it?]<<<<<

—Dow (20:47·43/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Yes.]<<<<<
—Spes (20:59:08/3-2-54)

CHALLENGE

The tradition of challenge, beyond the obvious implications, remains the most obscure of the traditions. At the most basic level this tradition allows one party to challenge the action or statement of another party. The parties involved choose a means to settle the conflict, then resolve the challenge. Too often, among those who lack complete understanding of the tradition of challenge, this tradition becomes nothing more than a right of arms; he who wields the bigger stick wins the challenge

The real intent of the challenge is to resolve the problem in question some other way than by direct and immediate violence. The following points represent my attempt to explain the several layers of etiquette surrounding the challenge.

·The challenge must result from a valid conflict, and must be undertaken with good intentions. Calling an improper challenge results in a loss of face.

·The means of resolution must bear some direct or symbolic relationship to the reason for the challenge. For example, one common challenge resembles the Rite of Progression. Person A feels that he or she could do a better job than Person B at Person B's job or position. A formally challenges B, usually by means of some task related to the job in question. If A defeats B, B must step down and allow A to replace him or her. This particular example takes place relatively often, because all Tir subjects believe the challenge proper, honorable, and valid.

·The means of resolution must be fair and appropriate. For example, two accounting clerks jockeying for position probably would not duel at dawn with pistols or rapiers. (However, if both parties agree, anything goes.)

·Once both parties agree to the means, they must abide by them Deviation from the means is considered dishonorable.

·The participants must accept the resolution of the challenge. Rejecting the outcome results in a great loss of face, more than actually losing the challenge.

Because the tradition of challenge has no actual rules or measures of a good or bad resolution, the process remains completely subjective. The immediate peers of those involved in a challenge become its de facto judges: if they do not accept the challenge as valid and the means as fair, the challenge becomes a farce. Though it appears that this system might suffer from extreme bias among certain tight-knit groups, the overriding desire for honor usually keeps the process fair.

>>>>>[Spes is correct in his description of the tradition of challenge. At least a dozen books are available on the structure and form of the challenge, ranging from insightful to ridiculous. I have heard of something I suspect might prove the definitive work on the subject (assuming it exists in book form). I once overheard Aithne Oakforest, speaking to Sean Laverty, refer to something he called the "Rites and Rituals of Challenge." Laverty laughed and offered to loan his personal copy to Oakforest, who in turn found this comment very amusing.

Just so that people understand that challenge may be called against anyone, I note here the rumor circulating around Royal Hill nearly a year ago that Ehran the Scribe was answering a challenge called against him. No one knew the substance of the challenge, but it apparently wreaked havoc in Ehran's personal life Ehran himself was hard to find for quite some time, lending credence to the rumors. When he did reappear, he seemed relieved of a burden.]<<<<<
—Aegis (08:31:50/3-8-54)

>>>>>[I'll bet.]<<<<<
—The Big 'D' (02:13:30/3-19-54)

>>>>>[I've warned you...]<<<<<
—The Laughing Man (03:55:50/3-21-54)

ORGANIZED CRIME

The Council of Princes proudly boasts that no organized crime exists in Tir Tairngire. As with many of the Princes' pronouncements, this one holds both truth and lies.

The truth of the statement depends on the definition of organized crime used. Granted, the widest-known crime organizations—the Mafia, the yakuza, the Triads, the Tongs, and the Seoulpa Rings—show no significant activity in the elven nation. However, they stay out mainly because the Tir has its *own* organizations—far smaller than the better-known players, but just as pervasive and influential.

>>>>>[Before we go any further, let's look at the big boys and why they're not in the Tir. The Tongs and the Triads have an almost exclusively human membership with many members actively anti-metahuman. For obvious reasons, this limits the degree to which they can penetrate the Tir. I don't expect this situation to change much.

The Mafia have become real equal-opportunity employers with regard to metahumans (despite the fury of some of the older dons, who cling to their bigotry like a security blanket). Generally speaking, however, the big families just aren't subtle enough to slip into the Tir. Evidence of family affiliation always exists, and the Tir immigration process always digs deeply enough to find it Ergo, few Mafia affiliates can get into the Tir, and definitely no heavy hitters. Because the families like direct, hands-on management—they don't go for "autonomous subsidiaries," which is all they'd ever get in the Tir—they don't play in the Land of Promise.

The Seoulpa Rings have established a toehold on the Astoria docks doing a little low-key hijacking and strongarm biz, but they're forced to be careful. On one side they've got the Peace Force cracking down and on the other is a couple of homegrown Tir outfits. The Peace Force is determined to arrest them; the private interests want to turn their cojones into donuts. Don't expect much expansion from the Rings in the foreseeable future

And now for the yaks. Even though it makes them choke, the *oyabuns* realize that they can't exclude metahumans any more, not if they want the family business to keep growing. The more progressive families recruit elves in Japan and bury the connections deep. (This task is easier for the yaks than the Mafia. Because Japanese society still considers the yakuza marginally acceptable, people are less likely to discuss their neighbors' yak connections.) Over the last five years or so, some of the major yak families have infiltrated elven recruits into the Tir.

So far, their operations haven't set the world on fire. A little gambling, a little prostitution; they dabbled in BTL for a while, but eventually gave it up as beneath their dignity. The *oyabuns* haven't seen any return on their investment yet, but you can say one thing about the yaks—they've got patient money.]<<<<<

—Public Eye (12:47:03/2-21-54)

Organized crime groups in other countries are usually structured along family lines (Mafia, yakuza) or as secret societies (Tong). In the Tir, the major local "players" take a corporate model Loyalty to the organization is bought and paid for through "salaries" and "profit-sharing plans." Acting in any way that harms or could harm the "corporation" earns the perpetrator an "exit interview" (death, often involving torture). Though it undoubtedly sounds stupid to outside observers, the crime corporations use the same jargon and buzzwords as normal corporations, but those who know understand the ominous overtones.

>>>>>[No drek. For example, a "pink slip" is a vibroknife between the ribs or a bullet in the head. "Corporate restructuring" is a purge "Poison pill" is a poison pill. "Hostile takeover" is just what it sounds like—a war. Really.]<<<<<

—PacWest (12:54:28/3-6-54)

Crime corporations frequently hide behind legitimate front organizations. This common "hide-in-plain-sight" strategy gives them a secondary source of funds to invest in illicit activities

>>>>>[Example: Intercoastal Shipping Corp. is a minor cargo carrier with a small fleet of dirigibles. They ship low-priority goods from Portland to as far south as Yreka. Not very profitable, apparently, but they're giving it their best effort. The government kicked in a few hundred large last year as a loan to help them expand. What the guvmint doesn't know is that their grant money ended up—indirectly, of course—in the chipslots of a good portion of Portland's chippies. Intercoastal Shipping owns one of the most efficient BTL duping and distribution networks on the coast. (Even taking into account the Seattle operators!) The interesting thing is that the Peace Force knows all about this operation.]<<<<<

—SPD (23:00:22/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Why don't they get shut down?]<<<<<

—Zed (14:10:57/3-5-54)

>>>>>[Dunno. Could have something to do with the fact that Intercoastal's CEO is Lugh Surehand's brother-in-law and a close chummer of Ehran the Scribe...]<<<<<

—SPD (22:58:16/3-5-54)

Rumors constantly circulate through the Tir and outside it of Dark Circles, magic lodges or groups that dabble in various areas of crime. No evidence exists to support these rumors, however, and I believe they are unfounded.

>>>>>[Surely not, my friend. The Dark Circles exist, and they do considerably more than dabble. The territory of the Tir produces a great deal of magical energy. Though the background count for the overall region is well within the expected parameters based on its history, numerous "hot spots" exist. (I shall deal further with these elsewhere in this document.) I understand that the Dark Circles choose to base themselves in such magically energetic areas, augmenting their own powers with the ambient level of mana.]<<<<<

—Paul Dant (14:20:31/6-17-54)

>>>>>[So what? What do they *do*?]<<<<<

—Tommy-Boy (03:08:57/6-18-54)

>>>>>[I've heard the same rumors, and frag that lame denial Spes posted. There's been a few really nasty cases of successful intimidation and extortion using threats of ritual sorcery. (And one or two incidents that went beyond threats. Very messy.) There seems little doubt that magically adept criminal groups—might as well call them Dark Circles, for lack of a better name—are behind it.]<<<<<

—SPD (23:13:04/6-18 54)

>>>>>[The back rooms of some of the clubs in Portland where hermetics hang buzz that the Dark Circles are initiating groups Which means the movers-and-shakers must be initiates of unspecified grade. Keep it in mind.]<<<<<

—Merlin (15:19:53/6-19-54)

>>>>>[Magical terrorism. *Sigh*. Well, I suppose it was only a matter of time.]<<<<<

—Lucy Gucci (20:51:23/6-19-54)

GANGS

Tir Tairngire has somehow managed to keep gang activity to an amazing minimum. Gangs do exist, but as mere shadows of the predatory packs that terrorize downtown Seattle. Most subjects of the Tir go a year or more without seeing a single sign of gang activity.

>>>>>[Is he lying to us or to himself? Sure, the gangs in the Tir aren't half as banging as in Seattle, but they exist just the same, and they'll rip you up just as fast if you get in their way. Most of the gangs also support a smaller membership, but that doesn't make much difference either. It doesn't matter if you run afoul of thirty jazzed-up, chain-wielding orks or fifteen: you're just as dead.]<<<<<

—Ronnie (23:27:09/2-18-54)

>>>>>[Most of the gangs hang in the cities. The major urban players are.

The Spans: Mainly orks; colors are gray and black. This thrill-gang hangs down on the Willamette River shoreline in Portland

The Hooters: Mainly female humans; colors are different shades of red (preferably anything that clashes). This thrill-gang calls the Port of Portland home. An uneasy peace currently holds between the Hooters and the Spans because their turfs overlap, but that won't last long; it never does.

The Souldrinkers: Membership is restricted to anyone suicidal enough to risk their "blood initiation;" colors are anything that makes the ganger look like a zombie. This is a straight thrill-gang, though their leader has a reputation as a drek-hot hermetic mage (I'm not sure how much credence to give that rumor). The Souldrinkers hang around and under the Ross Island Bridge in Portland. They're not officially at war with anyone, but that doesn't mean much: they'll chew up anyone who crosses their path.

The Lynch Mob: Mainly human; colors are silver and black topped by mirror-finish helmets. This particularly aggressive go-gang cruises the Highway 5 strip between Salem and Albany. The Peace Force has tried to take them down twice that I know of The first time, the Mob ripped up the PF detachment; the second time the gang managed to pull the quick fade. These gangers like big, powerful bikes with mounted weapons.

The Whirlwind: No racial bias (mainly young Gentry); colors are blue and white. This go-gang, smaller than the Lynch Mob, favors fast, maneuverable machines over the Mob's hogs. In a scrap, they depend more on tactics and maneuvering than brute force. They claim the highways around Albany as their territory, which puts them into frequent conflict with the Mob.

The Ancients: Yes, the archetypal elf go-gang supports a chapter in Portland. If anything, they're more aggressive than their Seattle counterparts. They show up all over Portland on any given night. I keep hearing hints that their leaders are of high social rank, using their privileges to stay out of trouble and move freely into and out of the city.

The Caps: Mainly elves; colors are green and gray. This small but vicious go-gang claims the streets of nighttime Salem.

You'll note I said most of the gangs are urban. I list a couple of the nastier rural ones below:

Hell's Champions: Mainly ork; colors are black and red. A "gypsy" gang, Hell's Champions are a bunch of bike-riding sociopaths who live off the land by terrorizing farmers, robbing roadhouses, and indulging in other common tricks of the trade. As their name implies, they cruise the Hells Canyon area, but often travel as far southwest as Baker City. Word is, two months back they scragged a Peace Force convoy heading for the eastern border...and scooped all their heavy weapons. Bikers with mil-spec weaponry: the very idea gives me the cold shakes.

The Gypsy Wheelers: Mainly ork and troll, colors are gray and white. The Wheelers function as a "gypsy" gang, much like the Champions. No one knows where they came from, but the most popular urban folklore claims that they're Californians who managed to avoid getting kicked out after the Battle of Redmond, staying behind to get their licks in against the elves that confiscated their lands. Don't buy this, chummers. Maybe the Wheelers started out with that goal in mind, but now they mess up *everyone*, not just the occupying forces. These psychos operate anywhere between Ashland, Klamath Falls and Yreka.]<<<<<

—Lonce (09:58:45/2-23-54)

TIR TAIRNGIRE PEACE FORCE

Tir Tairngire tasks its Peace Force with "defending the fabric of the nation against threats from within and without" (to quote a portion of their charter). They handle military, constabulary, and other related duties throughout the nation.

HISTORY

The Peace Force originated with the small, well-trained police force Lugh Surehand created as Mayor of Portland, before Tir Tairngire seceded. Even after the secession, the group initially kept its primary function of upholding the laws of the Salish-Shidhe Council. Surehand gradually exerted more and more control over the force, replacing the force's popular first chief, an Amerindian named John Big Smoke, with one of his own cronies. This new chief, Rainer Grundman, a German elf from Berlin, operated very differently from Big Smoke. Portland's local population knew and loved Big Smoke; Grundman preferred to work behind closed doors. The chief of the force made himself inaccessible; no one could talk to him without an appointment, and his staff made getting an appointment close to impossible.

Though some people resented Big Smoke's ouster, most either failed to notice or did not care. During 2033 and 2034, under Grundman's command, the Peace Force—as it was officially known—grew rapidly. The force set up training centers along the Columbia River, and many new immigrants went straight into its ranks. Hindsight shows that Surehand and Grundman built their military force during this time, in part by recruiting trained soldiers from elsewhere in the world. During these years Surehand must also have acquired heavy weaponry from his unknown corporate sources, but at the time, nobody realized what was happening.

In May 2035, when Salish-Shidhe forces tried to cross the newly established border into Tir Tairngire, they discovered—to their terminal detriment—that the "training centers" actually served as military fortifications and staging areas for the nation's defensive forces. The Peace Force had become an army.

By late 2036, the situation stabilized again. The Peace Force had successfully established the Tir's borders and diminished military threats to the nation. The Peace Force remained under the nominal control of Lugh Surehand, now High Prince, but Rainer Grundman remained the organization's de facto commander. In 2037, Grundman stepped down from his position citing ill health, and died soon thereafter.

>>>>>[Is Spes trying to continue the Big Lie, or does he honestly not know? Rainer Grundman planned a military coup against Surehand and his lap-dog Princes, scheduled to come off on July 22, 2037. Sometime in May, Surehand discovered the plot (probably through a couple dozen spies in Grundman's command post and one or two under his bed). Grundman's "ill health" resulted from an earth elemental—possibly summoned by Surehand himself—tearing his spine in two. Surehand made up the story of Grundman's "retirement" to cover up all traces of Grundman's potentially successful coup plot. The bloodletting that followed in the Peace Force officer corps, as Surehand and his cronies cleaned house, is said to have been of epic proportions.]<<<<<

—Nash the Slash (10:23:15/2-19-54)

>>>>>[Truly? I had *not* heard that. But it does explain much.]<<<<<

—Spes (21:00:44/2-19-54)

Surehand took his time replacing Grundman, in the interim becoming commander in chief of the Peace Force in fact as well as in name. He restructured the Force by splitting it into two divisions, the military and the constabulary. Some six months later, having completed the restructuring, he named another European "import," Ellya Therese, as commander of the entire Peace Force. Therese in turn named two generals to command the two divisions. General Martha Gardener for the constabulary, General Rory Harty for the military. These three continue to lead the Peace Force.

>>>>>[Ellya Therese—what a chrome-plated slitch that one is. Dedicated, unshakably loyal to Surehand (which puts a big lump in the craws of the other Princes on the Council, you can bet) and a brilliant administrator

Martha Gardener came to the Tir from Texas, where she worked with the Houston Police Leaving suited her just fine, because the Texans were still trying to figure out what to do with their metahuman officer. She still holds a serious grudge against Texans, though she'll deny it to her last breath.

And Rory Harty came to the Tir from South Africa. A negroid elf who worked for the South African paramilitary police force, he left that country one step ahead of charges accusing him of using the force as a private army. He's married to one of Surehand's daughters, but rumor says he's bumping uglies with Ellya Therese]<<<<<

—The Big Eye (13:11.34/2-24-54)

MILITARY DIVISION

Though small as armies go, the Tir military is exceptionally well-equipped and well-trained. Harty's first major decision as general established friendly ties with arms manufacturers and dealers throughout the world. His influence allows the Tir to acquire cutting-edge military technology, which he uses to design his army around small, maneuverable, task-flexible units. Training stresses combined-arms operations, and magic plays a major role in all attack and defense plans.

Individual units, such as armored divisions, show less overall strength than comparable units in any other army on the North American continent. For example, CAS front-line divisions are built around heavy hovertanks like the Stonewall, but equivalent Tir units are based on light LAV t-birds.

>>>>>[In a toe-to-toe slugfest, a CAS armored division can slag down a Tir armored division with minimal casualties. Of course, Tir forces never let themselves get drawn into toe-to-toe fights, instead hitting the CAS unit (or equivalent forces from any army) from the flanks or from the rear, whittling away at them with air support and magic, and so on. It's just like David and Goliath, and the elves are the ones with the sling.]<<<<<

—Sun Tzu II (11:34.22/3-18-54)

The major armory and military base stands on Hayden Slough just west of Salem. Harty set up another large base at Camp Withycombe, the old Oregon National Guard armory, southeast of downtown Portland outside the Wall. The third major base lies on the outskirts of Yreka. <<**block delete: 2.7 Kp**>>

>>>>>[Okay, chummers. Spes dropped in a lot more about the military, but I chopped most of that stuff. And don't any of you bullet-heads out there give me any jazz about it. Shadowrunners don't go up against any military and live to talk about it, and I don't want to even indirectly encourage that kind of suicide]<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (11:01:42/2-8-54)

>>>>>[The military is hiding a super-secret research lab out in the wilds near Christmas Valley. The buzz I hear says it's a bioweapons plant, and that makes sense. The Tir's big into genetic engineering Bioweapons, bacterial and viral agents of war, would fit right in.]<<<<<

—Maitre (15:07:11/4-3-54)

>>>>>[The Christmas Valley plant is not really a military lab, as such. TIC—Telestrian Industries Corporation—runs it *for* the military.

Do you know there used to be a biogenetics research establishment in Christmas Valley, way back before the turn of the century? Those people were into viral work even then, when Telestrian came on the scene, they just bought out the existing facilities and research.]<<<<<

—Firewatcher (11:23:33/4-4-54)

>>>>>[What I hear—and it scares the drek out of me, chummers—is that one of the viral agents that the old Christmas Valley lab was working on got out. This supposedly happened in 2010. That's right, chummers, I'm talking VITAS-3.]<<<<<

—Laredo (15:11:31/4-5-54)

>>>>>[That's drek, Laredo. The VITAS plague broke out in New Delhi, not Oregon.]<<<<<

—Viv (12:05:11/4-6-54)

>>>>>[*Sez who?* The government historians? When did you start believing them?

And get this: if you liked VITAS-3, you're going to *love* VITAS-4! Coming soon from the drawing boards of the TIC lab in Christmas Valley]<<<<<

—Laredo (15:13:20/4-6-54)

BORDER PATROL

Detachments of the military division patrol and guard the borders of Tir Tairngire. Though border units generally carry lighter arms and armament than combat units, they still make formidable opponents. If necessary (for example, if a border incursion turns into a pitched battle), the border units can call up fast-response support from the combat divisions.

>>>>>[Take note, would-be "unofficial visitors." Stealth is the key if you want to slip the border. Don't try to blast your way through. Even if you take the border patrol, you might quickly find yourself in a firefight with a full-on armored division]<<<<<

—Broadbent (12:09:44/2-16-54)

GHOSTS

When they speak of them at all, the general public refers to the Tir Tairngire Special Forces as the Ghosts. Partly because their numbers include highly trained paratroop commandos and a high proportion of physical adepts and mid-grade initiated mages, the Ghosts enjoy an almost mythical reputation throughout the Tir. Few people know the details of their organization, procedures, or equipment. Though officially based at the Hayden Slough armory, the Ghosts spend most of their time elsewhere in the nation on training missions. According to conventional wisdom, the Ghosts remain untried, but keep themselves at scalpel-edge readiness until the nation needs their talents. As with many other things in Tir Tairngire, conventional wisdom may differ from the truth.

>>>>>[Conventional wisdom's bulldrek, and you know it, Spes—so knock it off with the coy hints. The Ghosts perpetrated some nasties in Salish-Shidhe, CalFree, and the Ute. A CalFree military "observation post" (actually a staging area for a probing raid) just south of Redding blowed up real good last month, and the whole op reeks of the Ghosts. You more militant runners out there should remember that the Ghosts sometimes operate *inside* the Tir as SWAT teams, hostage-rescue task forces, and so on. Think of them as magically active analogues of the British SAS, and you'll be on the right track.]<<<<<

—Taser (02:52:32/2-19-54)

>>>>>[With an emphasis on the magically active *All* Ghost mages are initiates. In fact, the Special Forces unit maintains a magical group calling itself the Ghost Circle that can grant grades of initiation. I don't know what percentage of the Ghosts are physical adepts, but I'd guess more than half.

Runners may also be interested to know that the Ghosts train with a wide range of intelligent, very nasty paranimals. Like, we're talking paratroops with birdman backups here.]<<<<<

—Zonker (11:49:18/2-27-54)

CONSTABULARY

The constabulary division enforces the laws of the nation within Tir borders. Peace Force police officers usually wear armored clothing when on normal duty and carry only a heavy pistol, a taser, and either a stun baton or shock gloves. They patrol in lightly armored cars similar to the General Products COP, a common sight on Seattle streets.

>>>>>[The above may be true in Salem, but not in downtown Portland. There, the cops are armed and armored as if they're going to war. (Which I guess is possible, considering the condition of southeast Portland...)]<<<<<
—Rotter (10 00 56/2-25-54)

The constabulary division carries suits of medium body armor and heavier weaponry, usually an assault rifle and a combat shotgun, in the patrol cars. All police officers stay in constant contact with their dispatcher via installed radios or "button" transceivers, which the officer inserts in one ear and that work by bone conduction. The uniform belt buckle mounts a radio PANICBUTTON with a built-in homing device. The PANICBUTTON also communicates by short-range FM with a life-signs monitor surgically implanted under the officer's skin over his heart. If injury profoundly disturbs the life signs, the PANICBUTTON automatically triggers to warn the dispatch system that an officer is down.

Tir police officers may stop and question anyone at any time and demand to see personal identification. A subject cannot refuse this request; doing so is a crime punishable by a 1,000 nuyen fine. Officers frequently ask non-elves walking the streets of Tir Tairngire to present their VAV or proof of residence.

>>>>>[In other words, chummerinos, if you ain't elf, you're going to get rousted all the bloody time.]<<<<<
—Hardcase (20.12.53/3-17-54)

While they have the right to question subjects on the street, the police cannot conduct personal searches without probable cause. If a subject believes he has been searched without such probable cause or due process, he can apply to bring a civil lawsuit against the officer. The magistrates rarely grant such applications, however.

Police must obtain a warrant in order to force entry to a privately owned building and conduct any form of search. An equally legal procedure allows officers to ask the owner of a building to "invite" the police to enter and conduct a search. The owner has no obligation to offer such an invitation, of course.

>>>>>[No—you're well within your privileges to tell the armed-and-armored street monsters on your doorstep that they're not invited in. Then just hope they don't decide to kick your hoop.]<<<<<
—Jeb (23 20 00/2-25-54)

A subject who believes his property was searched improperly can apply for a civil lawsuit against the officers involved. As with a personal search, such applications are rarely granted

>>>>>[Thought so.]<<<<<
—Hardcase (20 13:16/3-17-54)

The Peace Force constabulary contains proportionately more mages, mainly weapon-trained combat mages, than any other police force in North America, public or private. Wards protect all precinct houses against magical attack or surveillance.

>>>>>[According to Tir laws, a mage-cop who astrally projects into your house has broken the law because he didn't ask to be invited—unless he's got a warrant, of course. Here's the drekky part: it's *perfectly legal* for the mage-cop to whistle up a watcher spirit and send *it* into your place for a look-see, then get a report on what it saw. Obviously, astral security must be a key issue if you're into anything even a little shadowy.]<<<<<
—Morag (13:40:35/3-20-54)

NETWATCH

The Peace Force recently created a sub-group within the constabulary called Netwatch, consisting of trained and well-equipped deckers patrolling the Matrix for illegal activities. Netwatch officers receive standard utilities of high quality, but frequently modify them to suit each decker's individual style.

>>>>>[I had the bad luck to get in a decker dogfight with one of these Netwatch slots. Good moves, and meaner than snot. His big guns were the attack and shield utilities, and a specialized form of trace and report that a decker can initiate. I'd guess the first two probably benchmarked at 8, and the trace and report utility might clock in at 9 or 10. (Don't quote me on this: I was too busy having them used on me to do real benchmarks.)]<<<<<
—The Lash (21:54:35/2-28-54)

>>>>>[Man, they get good hardware too, all supplied by the fragging government. The government-issue decks run on a par with a Fuchi Cyber-7: MPCP 9, Hardening 4, Active Memory 225 Mp, Storage 1K Mp, Load Speed 50, I/O 35. But you can bet the slots juice the performance even further with personal mods (first thing *I'd* do would be jazz the I/O). Oh, to be *given* a deck worth near a mil...]<<<<<

—Red Wraith (23:04:32/2-28-54)

>>>>>[They're not all top of the line, Wraith. The guys at the bottom of the totem pole get stuff built around a MPCP that clocks in at 6 or even less. Most of the other stats are the same, but as you know, all the other components match that doggish MPCP chip-set.]<<<<<

—Hellraiser (22:40:23/4-2-54)

Netwatch tactics concentrate on engaging a hostile decker long enough for a detachment of beat cops to reach his or her physical location and take the decker into custody. The law allows Netwatch officers to penetrate *any* computer system within the Tir's RTG, without asking permission, receiving a warrant, or giving warning of their intention. Once inside a system, however, they cannot alter or erase data. They may scan, but *not* download, anything they find.

>>>>>[Frag, that's *crazy*. The netcops can just wander in and run roughshod through your datastores, without so much as a by-your-leave? What's to keep them out?]<<<<<

—Minx (14:51:56/3-6-54)

>>>>>[IC, chummer. Lots and lots of cutting-edge IC.]<<<<<

—The Lash (21:42:08/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Yeah, that's okay if you're using the non-lethal stuff. If a Netwatch cop gets his deck cooked by blaster IC, tough drek—that's the way the cops view it. But if the meat is geeked by black IC—which is definitely, officially illegal within the Tir—then you're facing some unpleasant repercussions.]<<<<<

—Target (18:42:17/3-9-54)

>>>>>[The two divisions of the Peace Force aren't completely independent. They do a lot of crosstraining and sometimes transfer individuals between divisions. So don't think that the Peace Force border guards won't recognize you just because it was the constabulary who looked at your ID.]<<<<<

—Duncan (02:53:06/3-10-54)

>>>>>[And don't forget about the Black Daggers, a group of Special Forces-trained commandos who work outside the normal reporting chain of command. They're trained assassins, and very good at what they do. Rumors say they've operated in Seattle, CalFree, CAS, and as far afield as Japan, eliminating those the Tir believes would be better off dead.]<<<<<

—Barghest (14:50:43/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Bulldrek. There's no such thing as the Black Daggers. It's just another urban myth made up to frighten children. Probably created

by the Humanis Policlub or some other fraggers.]<<<<<

—Gustav (03:26:05/3-15-54)

>>>>>[The group is real, all right. And yes, they *have* operated in Seattle, but not on wetwork. One of their operatives came here to retrieve an item that the High Prince somehow "lost."]<<<<<

—Lady Sal (19:57:56/3-16-54)

>>>>>[You're talking about Blackwing, aren't you?]<<<<<

—Hite (11:30:59/3-18-54)

>>>>>[Look, Blackwing isn't a Black Dagger. He's just a Tir runner, hired by the government. That's all.]<<<<<

—Rip (19:59:03/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Right.]<<<<<

—Hite (10:00:43/3-22-54)

>>>>>[To the best of my knowledge, the Black Daggers are a frightening rumor, nothing more.]<<<<<

—Spes (00:15:18/3-23-54)

PORTLAND

VITAL STATISTICS

Population:	2,100,000
Human:	10%
Elf:	70%
Dwarf:	10%
Ork:	7%
Troll:	3%
Other:	Negligible

Density in Populated Districts: 325 per square kilometer
Per Capita Income: 29,000¥*
Below Poverty Level: 32%
Persons Rated on Fortune's Active Traders List: 0%**
Persons of Megacorporate Affiliation: 17%
Persons of Tir Tairngire-based Corporate Affiliation: 35%
Felonious Crime Rate: 12 per 1,000 per annum
Education:
High School Equivalency: 55%
College Equivalency: 15%
Advanced Studies Certificates: 2%
Hospitals: 75

*Per capita income rises to 112,000¥ when the inhabitants of Royal Hill are included in the calculation.
**Rises to 3% when inhabitants of Royal Hill are included.

>>>>>[Okay, boys and girls, back to the Tourist Advisory Board. Scope this file for the ins and outs of Portland; as usual, feel free to add any useful tips from the shadows.]<<<<<
—Captain Chaos (08:10:21/2-24-54)

GOVERNMENT

Legally speaking, Portland occupies an ambiguous position. Though it lies within the territory claimed by the Tir, the city seems less than fully part of the nation. Portland is the one place in Tir Tairngire where outsiders can visit and even work without undergoing extreme scrutiny by the Tir's Immigration Department. Because of this, Portland exists in a strange twilight state, physically separated from the rest of the country by the Portland Wall.

The government of the city reflects its separation from the rest of the Tir. A military tribunal runs Portland, enforcing a state of modified martial law.

>>>>>[In other words, chummers, the cops are a lot tougher about breaking up trouble and arresting perps. The boys in blue will quickly turn to the "hard option" to stop any violence (particularly if "outsiders" and non-elves

are involved). Cops elsewhere might just roust you along if you're loitering on a corner at night; in Portland, they'll probably search you, generally frag you over, and then maybe arrest you for good measure

This doesn't necessarily mean the *level of enforcement* is exceptionally high. The cops in Portland are generally very militant, but they don't patrol as extensively as elsewhere—particularly in the lower-class areas of Portland where no self-respecting elf would ever venture. As I'll discuss later, some parts of the city are virtual free-fire zones as far as the cops are concerned. If they ever patrolled those areas, they'd be breaking skulls and making arrests right, left and center. But they *don't* patrol them. Generally, they seem to believe that as long as the trouble stays put—and doesn't spread into the better neighborhoods—the non-elves can blow the drek out of each other and good riddance.]<<<<<

—SPD (10:36:41/2-17-54)

The current ruling military tribunal comprises Lt. Col. Davis Atkins and Lt Col. David-John Collins, with Col. Jacob FitzWallace of the Border Patrol as chairman. The tribunal provides no popular representation and little recourse for any subject who disagrees with its actions.

>>>>>[The tribunal is, of course, answerable to the High Prince and the Council, but they have apparently given the military group a free hand in managing Portland.

Ever since the Council reorganized trade through its agreement with Seattle in 2052, diminishing Portland's significance in the Tir, the city's few solvent businessmen have become increasingly dissatisfied with the tribunal's apparent lack of concern over the Council's ruling. These businessmen want the tribunal to do something—*anything*—to make it easier to trade with the rest of the Tir. However, any change would mean reducing security at the gates through the Portland Wall, making the tribunal reluctant to take any steps in that direction.

The city's business community has not given up, however. Led by the charismatic Kate Mustaffah, a dwarf who emigrated from Europe in 2040, the newly formed Portland Business Council continues to lobby the tribunal. Mustaffah has taken to delivering petitions signed by thousands of businessmen to the military government, but the tribunal continues to ignore the business community's call for action.]<<<<<

—Spes (09 10:12/2-24-54)

>>>>>[Kate Mustaffah—there's a name from the past. "The Kat" was one of the better freelance arms dealers in Europe—never proved, of course, but an open secret among the polis and runners of the Continent. She probably came to the Tir because Europe was a tad hot and Interpol a little too close. God knows how she got into the Tir...or, more to the point, who she had to bribe and how much. The Kat owns most of the warehouse districts in Portland and indirectly controls the longshoremen and teamsters working the docks. She's a real nasty bit of work—charming and charismatic as hell when it suits her purposes, but the Kat's got a computer for a brain, and a heart...well, she sold her heart for a healthy profit.]<<<<<

—Packard (10:50.22/2-24-54)

>>>>>[Things might be changing. From what I hear, Lt. Col. Davis Atkins has developed a taste for the wire. Given the Kat's near monopoly of Portland's BTL trade, she may soon have more than enough clout with the good colonel to influence his decisions.]<<<<<

—Morrow (23:59:10/5-1-54)

THE PORTLAND WALL

The Wall is Portland's most noticeable feature. Ten meters high and almost a meter thick, this impenetrable barrier is topped by razor and cutwire, supplemented by two-phase X-ray lasers. A feat of remarkable engineering, the Wall surrounds the entire city, running along the south shore of the Columbia River from just west of the Rivergate Industrial District (Port of Portland), east to Interlachen, where it heads south through Fairview and Gresham. From there it cuts southwest to skirt Happy Valley on the west, and south along Highway 205 to the Clackamas River.

>>>>>[The 205 runs inside the Wall until the Clackamas River bridge, where it passes through a heavily-guarded gate.]<<<<<

—Zack (06:11:31/3-2-54)

To the north, the Wall hugs the north shores of the Willamette River and Lake Oswego. It then passes west through Durham to the King City area and turns north once more. Its eastern portion passes through the east end of Beaverton before heading almost due north to the Willamette River.

The major gates through the Wall are as follows.

Multnomah Gate: North of the city, this gate is located where Highway 5 crosses the North Portland Harbor (the south arm of the Columbia River). The location corresponds with the old Washington-Oregon State Line.

>>>>>[To reach the gate from the north, you've got to cross a huge old steel-span bridge (it might date back to before the secession—it sure looks like it). Fragging tank traps—big chunks of concrete—line the bridge like a slalom, making it impossible to get up enough speed to crash through the gate. All kinds of nasty ordnance are scattered on and around the gate and the bridge itself. A few troops patrol outside the wall. If you want to get through the gate, I *don't* advise the direct approach.]<<<<<

—BJ (11:39:58/3-3-54)

Sunnyside Gate: East of the city, Highway 205 passes through the Wall at the Sunnyside Gate. Sunnyside is the gate nearest to the Peace Force base at Camp Withycombe.

>>>>>[If you're thinking of blowing a gate, this is the *least* sensible one to try. If you get pinned down for more than a couple of minutes, rest assured a unit of Peace Force infantry—probably with air support—will come to squash you into a grease spot.]<<<<<

—BJ (11:41:02/3-3-54)

Sunset Gate: Also known as "Royal Gate" or "Palace Gate," the Sunset Gate is located on Highway 26 (Sunset Highway), which leads west from the city toward Royal Hill.

>>>>>[Surprise, surprise! This one's *heavily* guarded.]<<<<<
—BJ (11:41:56/3-3-54)

"Checkpoint Charlie": The largest and most important gate connecting Portland to the rest of the Tir is Checkpoint Charlie, located on Highway 5 near the region called Durham.

Willamette River Lock: Near Lake Oswego, the Willamette River turns southeast and passes through the Wall at the Willamette River Lock. There, a reinforced pontoon bridge and submarine netting block unauthorized boat traffic. A heavily-reinforced guard shack on the east shore contains the lock control system.

>>>>>[I've heard some buzz that the Willamette is mined just south of the lock. That's right, chummers, influence mines. If a boat gets through the lock legally, the mines are temporarily disarmed--presumably by radio—until the boat's clear of the area. If you manage to run the lock, however, you're going to get blown out of the water.]<<<<<
—Naf (00:11:47/3-1-54)

>>>>>[That's right, folks, the mines are *south* of the lock—just as all the heavy armaments are on the *in*side of Checkpoint Charlie and Sunnyside Gate. Remember, the Multnomah Gate's designed to keep unauthorized visitors from Salish-Shidhe out of the city. Sunnyside Gate, Checkpoint Charlie, Palace Gate and the Willamette River Lock are designed to keep "undesirables" from getting out of Portland and into the rest of the Tir. The Wall and the security make it tough to get *into* Portland from the Tir, but that's just a side effect. You want to get into Portland from the Tir illegally, fine. But getting out of Portland into the Tir—that's one cast iron bitch.]<<<<<
—BJ (11:50:04/3-3 54)

>>>>>[The Wall—however many klicks it is long—is tough enough to take a couple of rounds from a t-bird's main gun before folding Of course the first shot will set off alarm bells everywhere, and bad-tempered troops will converge on the trouble spot. Going under is a bitch, too—the foundation goes down at least 10 meters. Along the inside of the Wall, a kind of "warning track" extends 10 meters. I *think*—although I don't know for sure—that the track's liberally sprinkled with sensor arrays, and possibly anti-personnel mines. An array of razor wire and monowire tops the wall—you can probably make it over if you're acrobatic enough, but don't frag up or you'll hate it. Of course you'll also have to watch the pressure sensors along the top—any weight of more than 20 kilos or so triggers alarms And don't forget the two-phase lasers placed along the Wall's "sensitive" areas. The low-power phase isn't even as bright as a laser sight, but if you break the beam a bunch of big, beefy capacitors discharge and pump enough joules into the beam to core you front to back.]<<<<<
—Jumpy (10:55 29/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Jumpy didn't mention the radar net. Anything passing over the city at an altitude of 1000 meters or less gets picked up by a radar screen and tracked. And should it seem appropriate, the Peace Force base certainly has SAMs capable of knocking down anything within the city area. So much for the friendly skies.]<<<<<
—Van (12:02:47/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Of course, dropping flaming wreckage on the city's probably going to tick off Kate Mustaffah and her businessmen somewhat, don't you think?]<<<<<
—Molson (00:03:28/3-8-54)

PRECINCTS

Portland is divided into five precincts—named, logically enough, North, Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast. Except for finding addresses, the precincts make little difference in daily life.

>>>>>[Make *damn* sure you check the precinct prefix of the address when you're going somewhere. The 4000 block of Southeast 82nd is a quiet residential area. The 4000 block of *North*east 82nd is a good place to get geeked on the street.]<<<<<
—Lag (10:12:49/2-14-54)

The Peace Force organizes its patrols by precinct. Visitors should be aware that certain precincts enjoy a higher level of law enforcement than others.

>>>>>[This seems a good time to list my readings of enforcement levels. Take note that this *isn't* official—the Peace Force doesn't keep enforcement statistics the way Lone Star does. These are just my educated guesses.

	Security Rating
Rivergate Industrial District:	
Lower Class (industrial)	C
Faloma: Middle Class	B-C
North Portland: Upper Class	A
St. Johns: Lower Class	C-D
East St. Johns: Squatter	D
Swan Island Industrial Park: Squatter	C-D
Downtown: Upper Class	AAA
Maywood Park: Lower Class	C
Fairview: Middle Class	B
Gresham: Upper Class	A
Guilds Lake: Squatter	D
Willamette Heights: Luxury Class	AAA
Progress: Middle Class	B-C
Tigard: Middle Class	B
Elk Rock: Luxury Class	AAA
Milwaukee: Lower Class	C
Westmoreland: Luxury Class	AAA
Gladstone: Lower Class	C

Things may change, so don't bet your life on my guesses without scanning things first.]<<<<<
—SPD (11:15:33/2-17-54)

>>>>>[I used to live in Portland—was born there, grew up there in the '90s. The city I remember is nothing like what you describe. My folks used to live in Guilds Lake, and it was a nice middle-class community, homey.]<<<<<
—Silver Fox (12:45:10/2-24-54)

>>>>>[Things change, old-timer. Remember, the city was damn near depopulated, and the elves have largely rebuilt it to suit themselves.]<<<<<
—The Hood (02:14:53/2-27-54)

>>>>>[The docks have sure as hell gone down the drekker since Portland got dumped as the "gateway to the nation." Sure, some traffic still comes through, but it's a fraction of what it used to be. Lots of longshoremen are out of work, lots of warehouses closed down (which probably gives Kate Mustaffah the serious pip). The area's full of abandoned equipment rusting away and lots of rats—two-legged and four-legged—nosing around for scraps. By day, it's a wasteland; by night, the gangers use it as their playground.]<<<<<
—Sven (23:49 28/3-10-54)

>>>>>[There's a new business growing in the Guilds Lake area, near Terminal 2 on the Willamette south shore—meat racks, chummer, dozens of them. Joyboys, party-girls, they've got something for all tastes and all orientations. And they don't mind if you bring your own hardware and livestock, if that's what you're into. Prices range from next to nothing to *expensive*. Next time you feel the need to get the old pipes cleaned, check it out.]<<<<<
—Thumper (04:30:24/3-12-54)

>>>>>[Have you *seen* these places? Clean—not. Hygienic—not. Safe—*not*. Enticing—*decidedly* not. *Maybe* if you're doing a doctoral thesis on degradation, depravity and sexually transmitted diseases, it might be worth a look.]<<<<<
—Clean Gene (02:10.48/3-14-54)

>>>>>[True enough, but one place in the district—Stella's—is worth checking out from a sociological point of view. Stella's is a "BTL brothel"—nothing actually *happens* there, if you get my drift. Patrons wander in, make their selections from a kind of "librarian," then retire to a small booth with a simsense rig. Slot the chip, put on the 'trodes—or jack in if that's your speed—and settle back for the fireworks. Apparently the range of, um, *experiences* is astounding. Like Thumper said, all tastes and all orientations...and you don't even have to supply the livestock or take a shower afterwards. I haven't checked it out personally—I'm somewhat traditional when it comes to this kind of thing—but it seems like a great trend to encourage. The ultimate in safe sex!]<<<<<
—Victoria (12.57 01/3-15-54)

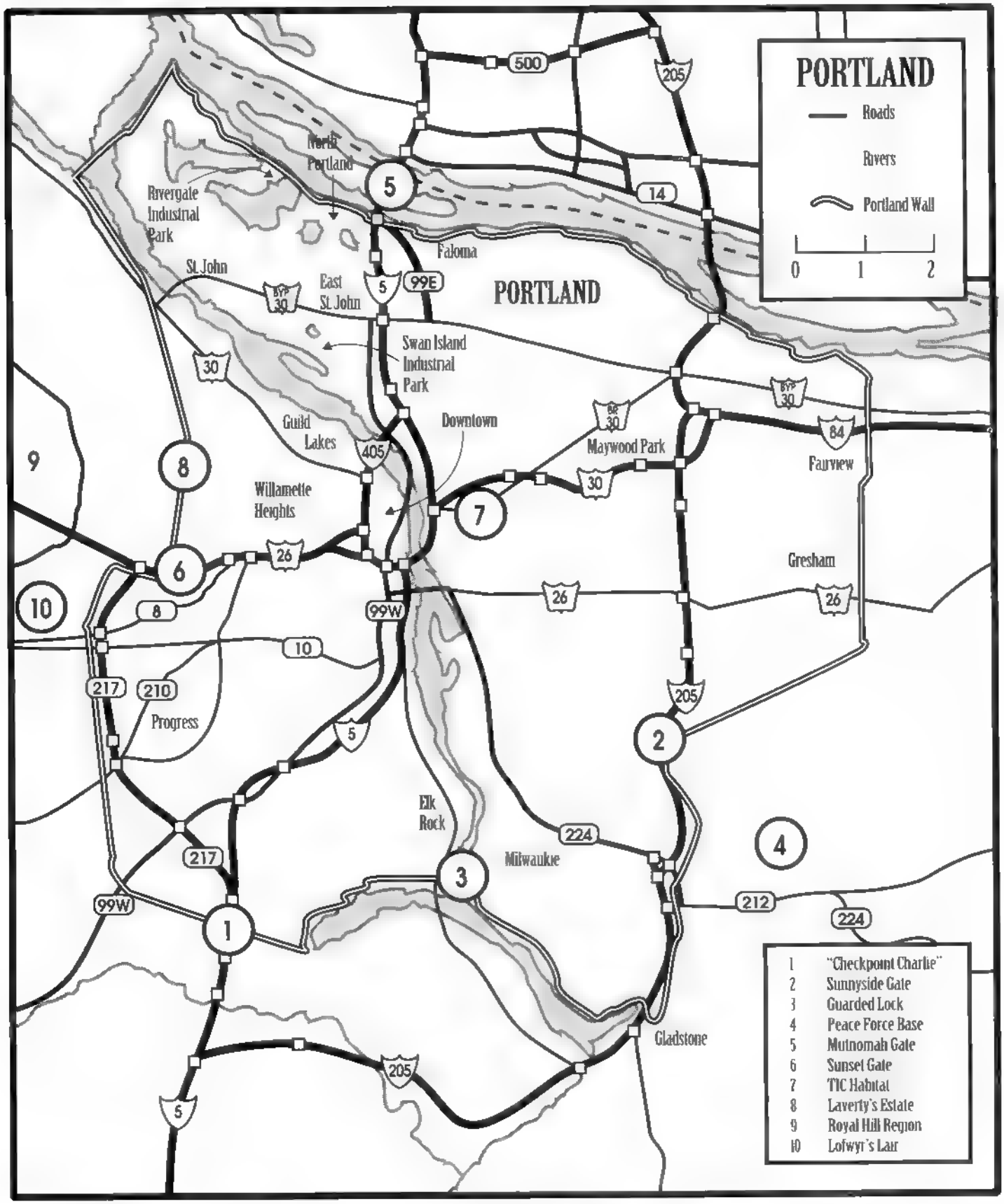
>>>>>[Safe until a bad BTL chip fries your brain or somebody slits your throat while your eyes are rolled back in your head.]<<<<<
—Cord (01:30 48/3-17-54)

GETTING AROUND PORTLAND

Portland boasts a well-maintained road system and a convenient network of highways. All highways and major surface streets feature state-of-the-art GridGuide™ technology. Sensors on the roadways monitor traffic conditions for both manually controlled and GridGuide™-controlled vehicles, and transmit the information over a short-range, broadband broadcast system. By law, all vehicles sold in the Tir must have a navigation subsystem that automatically notifies the driver of changing traffic conditions.

>>>>>[And of course the fragging elves had to choose a frequency distribution *different* from the one used in the UCAS and everywhere else in the world. Unless your nav subsystem's got true GPS (Global Positioning System) capability, it won't do squat while you're in Portland.]<<<<<
—Lee (01:15:35/2-27-54)

In 2049, the governing tribunal requested several hundred million nuyen to build a cutting-edge subway system connecting the downtown core with the outlying regions of the walled city. The Council granted the request, and work began in early 2050. The first subway line—a "demonstration of feasibility" project—was completed in January, 2051, with stations at Lloyd Center, the Convention Center, the Memorial Coliseum, the Port of Portland Terminal 1, Northwest Lovejoy Street and Northwest 19th Avenue, West Burnside Street and Broadway, and the civic building on Northwest Glisan. The technology proved even more efficient than projected, and the city began constructing additional lines.


PORTLAND
Roads
Rivers
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0 1 2
North Portland
Rivergate Industrial Park
St John
East St John
Faloma
PORTLAND
Swan Island Industrial Park
Guild Lakes
Downtown
Maywood Park
Fairview
Willamette Heights
Gresham
Progress
Elk Rock
Milwaukie
Gladstone
500
205
14
5
99E
30
405
26
99W
8
10
217
210
84
212
224
1 "Checkpoint Charlie"
2 Sunnyside Gate
3 Guarded Lock
4 Peace Force Base
5 Mutnomah Gate
6 Sunset Gate
7 TIC Habitat
8 Laverty's Estate
9 Royal Hill Region
10 Lofwyr's Lair

None of those lines were completed before the Council's decision in 2052 to downgrade Portland's importance. The Council withdrew all funding for the subway system, and construction came to an immediate halt.

>>>>>[The original subway line still operates; however, necessary maintenance is long overdue, and the system's on-time record has definitely gone downhill.]<<<<<
—Spes (00 30:10/2-25-54)

>>>>>[Good understatement, Spes. Sometimes the damn cars just stop between stations for minutes at a time, for no fragging reason. It's amazing there hasn't been a pile-up.]<<<<<
—Garth (02.05:02/3-14-54)

>>>>>[The stations themselves are firetraps, and no sane person will ever take the subway at night. Even hardened New Yorkers quake at the thought of using the Portland subway after midnight.]<<<<<
—Mona Lisa (15:48·03/3-17-54)

>>>>>[The other lines were never finished, but a network of maybe 100 klicks of tunnel were excavated for them. If you don't mind doing a little spelunking you can get down into them. They're a wiz place to hide if you need to do the quick fade, and a convenient stash for hiding drek you don't want found (like bodies, maybe).]<<<<<
—Skrip (09:15:04/3-20-54)

>>>>>[Sure, check out the tunnels. Come for a visit. But remember, we was here first.]<<<<<
—Big Solly (18:08·41/3-22-54)

>>>>>[Trogs in the fragging underground, fragging great.]<<<<<
—Scalpel (02:11:30/3-23-54)

>>>>>[It's not just trolls and orks. There's a coven (or whatever you call it) of slotting *vampires* down there, man.]<<<<<
—Mick (04:36:13/3-23-54)

>>>>>[Yeah, *right*! And 30-foot, radioactive alligators in the sewers, too. Seen Elvis lately, Mick?]<<<<<
—Bung (23:14:28/3-23-54)

>>>>>[The working subway *is* a little rough at night, but Mona Lisa overstates the case a bit. A ticket from anywhere to anywhere on the circular line costs you 4¥. Consider it a cover charge for a little entertainment. After midnight, the subway turns into a kind of department store of illicit purchases and pleasures. Need a hot chip or a cold piece? Ride the train...]<<<<<
—Marco Polo (16:04:32/3-25-54)

PLACES OF INTEREST

HOTELS

Portland Hilton

Average Hotel Archetype (15 floors)/1805 North Williams Avenue/Willis Burke, Manager/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 1503 (73 9481).

Owned by Hilton (Tir Tairngire) Inc., an independent Tir subsidiary of Hilton International, the Portland Hilton is close to the Coliseum and Convention Center and within easy walking distance of Lloyd Center.

Portland Executel

Luxury Hotel Archetype (23 floors)/1120 Northeast Broadway/Galen Pettigrew, Manager/Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 1503 (24-0948).

Part of a well-known chain, the Portland Executel boasts the highest standards of service and cleanliness, and the largest rooms of any hotel in the city. The Greenbower restaurant on the top floor offers an excellent view of the city core.

>>>>>[Costs a fragging mint, but if you're using someone else's credstick I highly recommend it. Sneer at the snotty maître d' in the Greenbower, tell him I said "hoi" and ask him if his voice is back to normal yet.]<<<<<
—Masher (23:09:04/3-17-54)

Skyhaven

Average Hotel Archetype (10 floors)/5250 Northeast 82nd Avenue/Ian Blaise, Manager/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 1503 (23-4820).

Just outside the airport gates, the Skyhaven is a popular choice among visitors to Portland. For occasional travelers laying overnight in Portland while enroute to other destinations, the hotel provides a bonded, secure area in the basement for luggage and cargo.

>>>>>[Arnold Throckmorton, an ork and "local businessman," runs a thriving smuggling business through this "bonded" area.]<<<<<
—Lykes (14:39:21/2-28-54)

West Slope Inn

Average Hotel Archetype (6 floors)/8536 Southwest Barnes Road/Beverly D'Agostino, Manager/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 1503 (22-4605).

Located less than one kilometer from Sunset Gate, the West Slope Inn offers low-key but dependable service, and good value at reasonable prices.

>>>>>[Doesn't do much business except around the time of Royal Birthdays and other ceremonial drek. Then all the good little dandelion-eaters come and rent rooms so they can wander down to Sunset Highway and watch the big parades.]<<<<<
—Vertigo (16:53:59/3-2-54)

>>>>[D'Agostino has been linked to one of the Dark Circles operating in the Portland area. Makes sense—why else would the manager of a mid-tier hotel have drek-hot astral security for her private office?]<<<<
—Dancer (21:48:09/3-9-54)

>>>>>[Traveler's Rest

Cheap Hotel Archetype (2 floors)/2875 NW Front Ave./Tony "the Rat" Ratner, Manager/Bias Against "Suits"/LTG# 1503 (11-0098) (if it's in service).

Locally known as the Rest In Peace, or Chez Roach, avoid this place if you don't like sharing your bed with six-legged roommates. Otherwise, the Traveler's Rest is cheap, and the Rat has a rep for "not tellin' nobody *nada*." The beer parlor downstairs is hopping most nights of the week but don't eat the food if you value your intestinal tract.]<<<<<

—Blakey (12:31:36/3-12-54)

>>>>>[The food ain't so bad. The "ratwurst" is vaguely edible, and the fries are great as long as you scrape the grease off first.]<<<<<

—Pal (23:03:41/3-16-54)

>>>>>**[The Ivanhoe**

Cheap Hotel Archetype (3 floors)/8301 North Ivanhoe Street/Leslie Hycks, Manager/No Racial Bias/LTG# 1503 (10-1143).

Located in one of the nastier parts of St. John, the Ivanhoe's a good place to heal up or hole up (or get yourself fragged up, if you're not careful). On the ground floor you'll find a good, old-fashioned biker bar, with two pool tables and a bartender who deals more than alcohol. If you want an unregistered piece, ask for the troll called Dog. (Warning: don't turn your back on Dog, and don't shoot stick with him for money.)]<<<<<

—Gowan (04:17:57/3-19-54)

>>>>>**[The Fairmont**

Cheap Hotel Archetype (4 floors)/15 North Knott Street/"Doc" Morgan, Manager/No Racial Bias/LTG# 1503 (38-3472).

If we're listing our favorite flops, the Fairmont is mine. Damn near under the Highway 5/Highway 405 interchange, it's not the most scenic locale. But it's cheap, as clean as this kind of doss gets, and the people there have a kind of "honor-among-thieves" mentality about not ratting on neighbors. And Jeff "Doc" Morgan actually *is* a doc (or was)—don't let his tattoos and two kilos of jewelry fool you. If you're punctured or sliced, he'll patch you up—for a fee, of course—and I've never had cause to complain about his work.]<<<<<

—Ranger (16:40:05/3-22-54)

RESTAURANTS AND BARS

Jeremiah's

Mid-Size Restaurant Archetype/1010 Northeast Broadway/Evan Buscza, Owner/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 1503 (92-3809).

A favorite among elven businessmen, this restaurant serves some of the finest northwest-elven cuisine in the nation.

>>>>>[Great if you're a small foraging forest animal. Sorrel, rose hips, dock leaves and dandelions—not a fragging normal dish on the menu.]<<<<<

—Carlo (17:23:23/3-7-54)

>>>>>[Evan Buscza's top dog in one of Portland's biggest "crime corporations," Ross Systems Inc.]<<<<<

—Bridge (01:37.07/3-9-54)

>>>>>[Kate Mustaffah is casting acquisitive glances at Ross Systems. Watch for fireworks.]<<<<<

—Ladner (12:38 48/6-1-54)

Niléstian

Mid-Size Restaurant Archetype/10 Southeast Harney Street/Hugh Laverty, Owner/Extreme Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 1503 (29-3881).

Perhaps the most exclusive restaurant in Portland, Niléstian is located in Westmoreland on the shores of the Willamette River, in the Portland Rowing Club. The food is exclusively vegan, and the head chef—Marcus Bitz—has won many awards for his innovative use of unique spices.

>>>>>[You need to make a reservation two weeks in advance and fragging near have to submit to a credit check. Dinner for two, not including wine, will cost you 400¥ and up.]<<<<<

—Connie (23:46:05/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Why bother telling us that, Connie? As if anybody who reads Shadowland is going to make reservations at the Niléstian. (Stake out the parking lot, maybe...)]<<<<

—Ralphine (02:34:45/3-16-54)

>>>>>[Yes, Hugh Laverty *is* related to Sean Laverty. I think second cousin once removed (but he came back).]<<<<<
—Faye (13:01:48/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Huh?]<<<<<
—Spud (09:17:54/3-21-54)

The Cave

Mid-Size Restaurant Archetype/815 Northwest Glisan Street/Finn Lunday, Owner/Bias Against Orks and Trolls/LTG# 1503 (65-6847).

Popular with businessmen and civil servants alike, The Cave serves ork cuisine (slightly modified for elven tastes, of course) in dramatic surroundings.

>>>>>[Fake stalactites and barely enough light to read the menu by—real dramatic surroundings, *neh?*]<<<<<
—Arian (02:14.52/2-19-54)

>>>>>[Let's get this straight. The Cave—a so-called "ork" restaurant, run *by* elves *for* elves ..and they *don't let orks into the place if they can help it!* What the frag *is* this drek?]<<<<<
—Mungo (01:28:07/2-24-54)

>>>>>[It's the Tir, that's what it is. Don't let it grind you too much, Mungo. The food bites back, and you'd hate the service anyway.]<<<<<
—Connie (23.18 48/2-27-54)

>>>>>[Finn Lunday has bugs hidden in all the tables. I hear he scores enough dirt to supplement his income quite nicely—not through blackmail (that's tacky), but through his "keen analysis" of business trends.]<<<<<
—Bridge (01:44:44/3-9-54)

Pat O'Grady's

Mid-Size Restaurant Archetype/975 Northeast Multnomah Street/Bent Ewald, Owner/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 1503 (34-5439)

A quiet bar decorated in dark woods with brass accents, O'Grady's is reminiscent of a British gentlemen's club. Only appetizers are served, but the restaurant boasts the largest selection of single-malt scotch whiskeys in Portland and several different brands of *Taéngelé*.

>>>>>[Snob city is more like it. Movers-and-shakers (and wannabes) come out to see and be seen. O'Grady's would be a great place to meet a Johnson, if a runner could get in the front door.]<<<<<
—Sargon (18:48:56/2-27-54)

NIGHTCLUBS

The Edge

Night Club Archetype/6575 Southwest Barnes Road/Jack Todd, Owner/Bias Against "Straights" or "Mundanes"/LTG# 1503 (00-0000)

Reputed to be the city's best venue for alternative, avant-garde, and cutting-edge live music, The Edge's lack of racial bias is unique among major clubs. Instead, the bias is against anyone who looks "mundane." Bizarre clothing is de rigueur at The Edge, and anyone in normal clothing doesn't even get in the door.

>>>>>[This place is stuck out in the boondocks, right next to Mount Calvary Cemetery. Honestly, the music's so loud and the sound insulation so skimpy, I'm surprised the neighbors don't threaten to move.]<<<<<
—Rex (18:57:00/3-4-54)

>>>>>[If it's too loud, you're too old, ya fossil. Some novahot bands come through The Edge, making that chrome-thrash sound like the bellowing of fragging dinosaurs.]<<<<<
—Wayne (03:47:41/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Aggressively trendy, the habitués wear their uniforms with a fragile arrogance. The subbasement contains two private meeting rooms with excellent sound insulation. Jack Todd sometimes lets old-time acquaintances use them for meetings. (By the by, Jack used to run the shadows under the name Zero. Heavy moves, and serious attitude.)]<<<<<
—Ringer (07.01:24/3-6-54)

Rockerbox

Night Club Archetype/938 Southwest Clay Street/Jacques Gerard, Owner/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 1503 (33-9293).

A mecca for mainstream music fans, Rockerbox boasts the

best in chrome and shag-rock enhanced by a state-of-the-art sound system and a light show second to none. Music aficionados from all social ranks rub shoulders at the 'Box, confident that the club's well-trained (and well-armed) security personnel will prevent trouble.

>>>>>[The door security is one step past intense—weapon detectors, chem-sniffers, you name it. If I had to guess I'd rate them at maybe 10 or up. Cause trouble inside and before you know what hit you (pun intended) you'll find yourself waking up in the back alley.]<<<<<

—Lionheart (14:17:03/3-7-54)

>>>>>[Which makes it a wiz place for a meet. Just slip the bartender some hard currency, and she'll let you use one of the private rooms in the back. BTLs and sometimes even cyberdeck software are available from the regular clientele. You can't score weapons in the club—obviously—but you can make contacts for a transaction elsewhere]<<<<<

—Blaster (16:40 27/3-8-54)

NewDawn

Night Club Archetype/5250 Northeast Fremont Street/Ariadne Dawn, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 1503 (24-6802).

Although typically described as a night club, NewDawn is actually a "listening room." No alcohol is served in the main area, and by strict tradition no one talks while a performer is on-stage. Aficionados of "environmental" music flock to the NewDawn to hear the latest acts.

>>>>>[Translation: "environmental" music is a direct descendent of the go-nowhere, sappy-sweet "New Age" music that first appeared in the 1980s and quickly found its way into elevators everywhere. If you want to hang out with a bunch of neo-Luddite, tree-hugging technology-haters, head for the NewDawn. (If you're visibly cybered up, the patrons will hate you, whether they've ever met you or not.)]<<<<<

—Ricky Dee (04:26:01/2-26-54)

>>>>>[Ariadne Dawn is part of a Dark Circle that calls itself Hard Green. As you'd expect, they're into slotting up high-tech any chance they get.]<<<<<

—Petruchio (12:52:31/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Hard Green's got some kind of hidden agenda beyond that, but I haven't scanned it yet.]<<<<<

—Elise (22:42:28/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Fairview Slopes

Bar Archetype/21557 Wistful Vista Drive (who comes up with these names anyway?)/Mark Wu, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 1503 (99-0492)

This place tries real hard to be a trendy retro-yuppie bar—ferns, brass, mirrors everywhere—but it doesn't quite make it. Still, the quiet room makes a good place for a meet. Portland shadowrunners of a few years back might recognize Mark Wu as Slider, possibly one of the drek-hottest deckers who ever lived. Although he doesn't run the Matrix anymore, Slider still can program a wiz utility, on time, to spec and under budget.]<<<<<

—Sangria (10:34:15/3-17-54)

>>>>>[**The Mill**

Bar Archetype/North Leverman Street (no number)/Grigori Nastia, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 1503 (38-0332)

You'll find this gem right in the heart of Swan Island Industrial Park at the north end of Leverman, jammed up against the bluff that leads up to Willamette Boulevard. A sign used to mark the location, but someone blew it up, which pretty well hints at the tenor of the place. (Around the docks, a slag who's had the drek kicked out of him is said to have "gone through the Mill.") The owner—nicknamed Nasty, and he is—works bar and seems to enjoy the frequent and gratuitous mayhem around the place. Don't mess with Nasty, he'll blow your guts out with a sawed-off shotgun. But you can slot with his customers all you like and he'll just watch. The Mill's probably the best place to score weaponry—up to but not including mil-spec quality—inside the Wall. Watch your hoop, though—cutting a deal and actually living to walk away with your purchase are two different things.]<<<<<

—Silas Marner (05:17:31/3-21-54)

OTHER LOCATIONS

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Tir Tairngire Civic Building

725 Northwest Glisan Street/LTG# 1503 (33-3301).

This large, institutional-looking building houses the military tribunal and offices for most of the civil servants required to run the civic government. Visitors must obtain a pass to get in the front door.

>>>>>[As you might expect, security is tight as it can get. This building itself was put up only about ten years ago, and features a strange mix of architectural styles: typical industrial-postmodern, with some northwest influences, and crap that looks somehow Celtic. The overall effect's hideous and oppressive.]<<<<<

—Kwan (19:48:39/2 28-54)

Hall of Justice

650 Northwest 9th Avenue/LTG# 1503 (33 3248)

The Hall of Justice occupies three city blocks. It contains the courts where Portland's magistrates hear cases, the major precinct house for the city's Peace Force constabulary, and holding cells in the basement

>>>>>[The hall appears to have been built according to the "ancient Chinese fortress" school of architecture.]<<<<<

—Kwan (19:49:40/2-28-54)

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Tir Tairngire Medical Center

Hospital Archetype/Southwest Terwilliger Boulevard near Southwest Campus Drive/Ian J. Precious, Chief Administrator/

LTG# 3503 (19-4310).

Portland's largest hospital, the TT Medical Center prides itself on housing the city's most advanced trauma unit. The trauma team boasts, with some justification, that any patient still alive when he comes in the front door will be alive 24 hours later no matter what injuries he has sustained.

>>>>>[Not quite, but pretty damn close. The trauma team does lose patients from time to time, but by god they fight like fiends to keep the number down. If you get yourself mauled in the shadows of Portland, with your last breath ask to be taken to the TTMC trauma unit.]<<<<<

—Lukaas (07.18 42/2-25-54)

>>>>>[Mages and shamans beware: if you're unlucky enough to need the services of the trauma unit, your magic is at risk. The trauma docs don't give a flying frag about protecting your precious talent. If you come into their area, their mandate is to keep you alive *no matter what*. And they just aren't going to pull their punches for fear of slotting up your art. I'm not slagging the medicos. If you're in the trauma unit in the first place, you're three-quarters of the way through death's door, and the docs are going to do *whatever* it takes to keep you from slipping through all the way.]<<<<<

—Pastiche (03:53:06/3-2-54)

Willamette Hospital

Hospital Archetype/Sam Jackson Park Road near Southwest Campus Drive/Duane McCuaig, Chief Administrator/LTG# 3503 (19-4384)

Located near the TT Medical Center, Willamette Hospital is Portland's largest teaching hospital. Many medical students from Willamette, UTT and *Cilesté* serve their residencies here.

>>>>>[Why? Because working as a doc in Portland is a baptism by fire. More people get slotted up more different ways in Portland than anywhere else in the Tir.]<<<<<

—Illuminatus (09 59:21/2-28-54)

>>>>>[Because a lot of the docs at Willamette are young and new, they look at problems in innovative ways. Which means they're more likely to patch a mage back together without slotting with his talent than are the "pros from Dover" at the Medical Center.]<<<<<

—Pastiche (03:55.42/3-2-54)

>>>>>[They're also more apt to make stupid mistakes]<<<<<

—Dorothy (10:01:57/3-6-54)

MISCELLANEOUS

Telestrian Habitat

LTG# 1503 (88-8888) (main switchboard).

The Telestrian Habitat, a massive structure covering seven city blocks, houses the headquarters of Telestrian Industries Corporation, the diverse Tir Tairngire conglomerate. Less than a dozen blocks south of Lloyd Center, the habitat is bounded on the north and south by Northeast Glisan Street and Northeast Davis Street, and on the east and west by Northeast Sandy Boulevard and Northeast 15th Avenue. Buckman Field lies directly to the west of the habitat. Although officially a public park, Buckman Field is a *de facto* part of the habitat grounds, since TIC security personnel actively discourage others from using it.

>>>>>[It looks different, but the TIC termite hill is the same as the Renraku Arcology in Seattle. No matter how much the corps pretend it's self-contained, the habitat's like a tumor, sucking away the vitality of the city around it.]<<<<<

—Chiller (08:02:01/2-27-54)

>>>>>[Much as I think arcologies *are* the way of the future, I have to admit Chiller has a point. So far, you can't create a successful arcology without a nearby (or surrounding) city to provide it with life support.

I've got to say, however, the TIC habitat is much more attractive than the Renraku construction. It's a weird blending of styles—like the TT Civic Building, but this time it works.]<<<<<

—Kwan (19:54:59/2-28-54)

>>>>>[You see a lot of that kind of thing in the Tir. I'll rant on at greater length later.]<<<<<

—Eriksen (21:48:41/3-1-54)

>>>>>[If you're interested in such things, you can take a guided tour of the habitat's public areas. Tours start at 10:30, 13:00 and 15 30, and last maybe an hour. Groups are limited to a dozen, and the ratio of security guards to visitors is damn near one-to-one, so don't get any goofy ideas. Call the main switchboard and ask for the PR department. For obvious reasons, you've got to reserve a space in advance.

Personally I think the visit's well worth the time. The habitat interior is spectacky, and the view from the observatory on the roof shouldn't be missed.]<<<<<

—LL (10:09:41/3-5-54)

>>>>>[Well, if you haven't had your tour yet you might be out of luck now. Some "tourist" recently managed to smuggle a bomb into the habitat's public concourse. She scragged herself in the blast, plus a couple dozen residents. Security's up to an all-time high, and tours are canceled. Hard Green, some kind of eco-freak outfit, claimed responsibility.]<<<<<

—LL (09:12:30/4-17-54)

>>>>>[But so did Alamo 20K, the Muslim Ork Army, TerraFirst!, the Nuevo Kachinas from Pueblo, and half-a-dozen other cadres of whacked-out nutters.]<<<<<

—Munster (13:29:51/4-17-54)

Lloyd Center

Northeast Multnomah Street, between Northeast 11th Avenue and Northeast 15th Avenue/LTG# 1503 (68-5227).

Once among the largest enclosed shopping malls in the world, Lloyd Center has fallen on hard times. All the major store chains have moved out, leaving behind only the smallest and hardiest outfits. The remaining tenants close their doors and roll down the heavy-duty security gates at nightfall, when the mall

becomes a playground for gangers, muggers and black-market entrepreneurs.

>>>>>[If Lloyd Center was ever "among the largest enclosed shopping malls," it must have been back in the 1970s. Comparing it to monsters like the West Edmonton Mall is like comparing a hincky little street-corner store to Saks Fifth Avenue.]<<<<<
—Tanqueray (21 30 57/2-26-54)

>>>>>[Most of the mall's full of squatters, gutterkin and other street trash, probably including a few runners on the fade. The north wing has turned into a kind of black-market bazaar. You can find just about anything at the barrows and booths that line the concourse. Chips, drugs, Saturday night specials, hot trideo sets, APDS ammo—Lloyd is the place for one-stop shopping]<<<<<
—Sig (09 45 05/2-27-54)

>>>>>[After dark, lots of gangers come out to play in Lloyd Center. Most of the time they just squat about, scrambling their minds with chips. But sometimes a couple of warring gangs will call in the troops and stage a major rumble in the central atrium or play search-and-destroy along the different wings and levels.]<<<<<
—Reuters (23:39 08/2-28 54)

>>>>>[You know the ice rink in the central atrium? (No ice there anymore, of course.) It's turned into the site of choice for ganger death-duels. Knife fights, hand-to-hand, even five-steps-turn-and-fire kind of fights. A big audience usually watches from the upper level, and staggering amounts of money change hands in side bets.]<<<<<
—MacBill (13·56·28/3-1-54)

>>>>>[As far as I can tell, only the lower level of the east wing is still in use. Maybe a dozen stores still operate there (probably because they don't have any choice—they can't afford to move, and the only alternative is closing their doors forever). They're all small operations—mom-and-pop kinds of places—selling miscellaneous drek like hardware, shoes, luggage, and—chip-truth—sporting goods!]<<<<<
—March (14 22 09/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Appearances can be deceiving, March Willamette Sporting Goods, the establishment you're denigrating, actually fronts a drek-hot body shop. Benjamin Juan, a Portuguese dwarf who specializes in headware, runs the place. Doc Juan doesn't have many good connections, so try to supply the hardware yourself. He's a top cutter, though, and his prices are very competitive.]<<<<<
—Garnet (22·09 48/3-5-54)

>>>>>[Doc Juan used to run a chop shop in Puyallup up to three years back. He skipped town one hop ahead of a bunch of nasty legbreakers. Seems his patients had discovered his habit of installing, er, *additional* hardware while they were under the laser—pulse-activated locators and drek like that. Then he'd turn around and sell the pulse-modulation specs to megacorps. "Want to know where such-and-such a runner is? Use this pulse-modulation on this frequency, and the little screen will tell you within half a meter." I don't know if he's still running the same scam, but you might consider asking him...like, with an Uzi. (And if you do, tell him I want my money back...*plus* the cost of having his extra little toy removed.)]<<<<<
—Boink (09:29:13/3-6-54)

>>>>>[**Lucky's**
Medium Store Archetype/Lloyd Center, West Wing, Upper Level/Antonio "Lucky" Luciano, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 1503 (32-5555).

This is one of the better bang shops in Portland. Lucky's a dwarf who really knows his weapons, and he keeps a wide assortment of handguns and firearm accessories on display. And if you can convince him you're not the heat, he's got a back room that'll make you drool. Combat shotguns, light MGs, assault rifles, grenade launchers...Lucky's is a fraggin' arsenal

Lucky has the only store still operating in the west wing of Lloyd Center—everybody else got driven off, burned down or blown up Like a fighter pilot, Lucky stamps a little mark on his front door for each would-be robber he guns down. Last time I stopped by, he was halfway through his third row of markers. One tough dwarf.]<<<<<
—Penn (09:24:43/3-9-54)

>>>>>[Last week Lucky got himself a "partial." Some cybergirl tried to rob the place, and Lucky opened up on her Didn't geek her, but the would-be robber *did* leave some of her anatomy behind. That explains the slightly chewed cyberarm Lucky's got mounted over the door]<<<<<
—Featherstone (03:41·58/3-20-54)

Portland Civic Stadium

Southwest Morrison Street between Southwest 20th Avenue and Southwest 18th Avenue/LTG# 1503 (98-3492) (ticket office).

The Civic Stadium is the home of the Portland Marchers professional hurling team, the current leaders of the NHA league. Rebuilt in 2047, the stadium seats 25,000 in air-conditioned comfort. During the hurling season, the Marchers practice and play their games in the arena. During the off-season the stadium hosts various other public events, such as concerts, performances, and other sporting events.

>>>>>[More weird architecture. And *bad* architecture, at that—the roof leaks.]<<<<<
—Kwan (20:11:32/2-28-54)

>>>>>[At big games—and just about every game's a big game—the stadium security makes the place look like an army base. The measures are intended to keep the "hurling hooligans" from bringing in too much offensive weaponry, but they also reduce the risk of terrorist action. (After the bombing of the Telestrian Habitat, everyone's a touch paranoid.)]<<<<<
—Horst (23:00:16/4-18-54)

Tir Tairngire Museum of Science and Industry

Washington Park/LTG# 1503 (20-0001)

Before the Treaty of Denver, this facility was the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), a world-famous exhibi-

tion of advanced technology. When the region became part of the Salish-Shidhe Council nation, the name was changed simply to MSI. When Tir Tairngire seceded, the name changed again.

In 2045, the city added a second, larger, hemispherical building housing a "simsense theme park" at the TTMSI site. The new building comprises six simsense studios, each seating 100 or so patrons. A simsense electrode rig connects each seat with a central, high-resolution simsense player. Each studio features a different simsense "experience," lasting about 30 minutes. At the present time, the shows are "Roller Coasters of the World," "Desert Wars—Tank Commander," "Strike Eagle Pilot," "Blue Water, White Death," and "Speed!". One show costs 15 nuyen; a full-day pass costs 40 nuyen. Admission to the science museum in the old building is five nuyen for adults, one nuyen for children.

>>>>>[The war shows are watered down—"sanitized," because a lot of the audience is kids. But "Roller Coasters of the World" is real enough to make you want to yarf, and "Speed!" gave me the biggest rush I've ever had with my clothes on (imagine yourself strapped to the nose of a low-flying hypersonic missile...).]<<<<<

—Zax (17:30:10/3-4-54)

>>>>>[Technologically, the simsense gear is topnotch. I've never experienced better resolution and immediacy through a 'trode rig—damn near as good as you're going to get if you use a datajack.]<<<<<

—Gregg (13:41:38/3-5-54)

>>>>>[It *should* be pretty hot, considering TTMSI paid a cool mil for each player.]<<<<<

—Vergil (00:32 32/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Hot flash for all you simfreaks out there: TTMSI ditched "Blue Water, White Death." They've closed that studio down for a total refit, won't be open again until November, and dropped a blanket of total secrecy over what the new offering's going to be

Of course, I laugh at blankets of total secrecy. Here's the scoop.

They're installing some kind of interactive thing—more virtual reality than straight simsense. The data flow's bidirectional, not just unidirectional, so your responses will alter the flow of the show (How they're going to handle input from 100 different brains, I don't know.) They call the show "Atlantis"—a semi-mythological pseudo-fantasy about some mighty civilization before the dawn of time, or some such bulldrek. The hardware's even more impressive than what TTMSI's using now, and I understand EoTer Inc. developed the software. Watch for this one, chummers, it's going to be novahot.]<<<<<

—Android (05:14:39/4-2-54)

>>>>>[EoTer Inc. is owned almost entirely by Sean Laverty. Anything Laverty's involved in is done *right*, so Android's correct: this is going to be wiz.]<<<<<

—Skene (10 40:47/4-7-54)

ROYAL HILL

Royal Hill is the general name for the region beyond the Portland Wall, west of the city. The area includes the districts formerly called Oak Hills and Meadowhurst. Rolling forests cover the Hill, concealing palatial estates owned by the Princes of the Council and others of Royal rank and significant influence in the nation

Low wire fences, more symbolic than functional, surround Royal Hill, but the area's lush greenery hides a sophisticated system of sensor arrays, pressure pads, closed-circuit video cameras and other devices installed around its perimeter. A squad of Knight Errant security personnel quickly respond to any unauthorized incursion.

>>>>>[Those Knight Errant slots take their responsibility seriously Even if the sensors and drek pick up only one slag going over the fence, a whole squad—six men with enough firepower to toast a wizworm—will respond. Naturally, larger incursions trigger a more substantial response.]<<<<<

—Riker (13 08 38/3-10-54)

>>>>>[If *I* went over the fence—which I wouldn't, I'm not stupid—I think I'd prefer to meet up with a KE squad than some of the *other* nasties that patrol inside the perimeter. Like, elementals, forest spirits, and hungry, vicious paranimals. At least I've got a chance of talking a KE trooper out of geeking me. Hungry piasmae and drek like that don't listen worth a frag]<<<<<

—Monitor (10:06:11/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Some of the larger (and richer) estates have *sirens* as watch-beasts. You know—those Awakened pterodactyl-like things. They're vicious, aggressive, and highly territorial Take precautions against their song if you're considering penetration.]<<<<<

—Goldenrod (09:41:51/3-17-54)

The Sunset Gate and westbound Sunset Highway (Highway 206) provide access to Royal Hill from the city. The highway ends at the perimeter of the Hill region, where it splits into numerous smaller roads The Sunset Gate, located where the roadway reaches the perimeter, consists of a fortified gate and an inspection station manned by Knight Errant personnel.

>>>>>[Security at the gate is as stringent as you'd expect, and then some. If you're not of Royal social rank, you're *not* getting in this way]<<<<<

—Riker (13:11:35/3-10-54)

Rambling, forested grounds and palatial residences mark the Princes' estates in the Hill region Perhaps the most striking of these beautiful estates belongs to Ehran the Scribe.

>>>>>[Scope Ehran's and Sean Laverty's places. The architecture will blow your little mind]<<<<<

—Jerome (17:31:11/2 27-54)

>>>>>[Time for a treatise on architecture. Stylistically, the estates in the Royal Hill region are all over the map Some follow the familiar postmodern school, like so many of the luxury-class places on Vashon Island and elsewhere around Seattle. Some are aggressively Gothic in design, with strong Celtic influences. (This style seems to be typical of the "also-ran" Princes—influential in their own circles, but with nowhere near enough pull to make it to the Council)

And then we have the style exhibited in Ehran's and Laverty's estates, and in the Royal Palace itself—in a word, *bizarre*. These buildings show some modified Celtic influences (but nowhere near as strong as in the also-rans' places), with elements reminiscent of native Salish styles. But those influences function as mere grace notes to the primary forms of the structures—forms that startle the viewer with their alien geometry, rather like something by M.C. Escher...except that these buildings *work*.]<<<<<

—Eriksen (22:20.46/3-1-54)

>>>>>[But they *don't* "work." Or they wouldn't without vast amounts of magic.]<<<<<

—Saltino (01.23:50/3-2-54)

>>>>>[I can see what Eriksen's getting at here. If you look at Ehran's and Laverty's places and at the Palace, you'll see a unified style, but a style with no predecessor school. The style seems to have sprung up, fully realized and mature, from nowhere.

I know what you're thinking—"It's one architect's vision."

But it's *not*, chummers. The three places I'm talking about were designed by three different people. And if you compare them, you'll see a unity of style, *not* a similarity of features. For example, both Ehran's place and the Palace have tall, slender towers. Laverty's estate doesn't.]<<<<<

—Duke (11:29:00/3-2-54)

>>>>>[So they copied elements of Native American and Celtic style. So what's so hard to understand?]<<<<<

—Zingbat (14.45:02/3-2-54)

>>>>>[It's not that simple. I'm convinced—and I think Duke would probably agree—that we're *not* looking at "borrowing" of historical styles. Certainly, the similarities between the "Royal Elven" style (if I can call it that), Salish, and Celtic styles undeniably point to some connection. But it's *not* borrowing. It's almost as if the three styles evolved from the same progenitor style . whatever that might be.]<<<<<

—Eriksen (18:41:20/3-2-54)

>>>>>[How can you tell what's real around here anyway? Magical illusions embellish so much of the Hill.]<<<<<

—Moisewitz (14:19:47/3-3-54)

>>>>>["Tart up," you mean False facades, little copses of trees where actually a five-car garage stands, roads where no roads exist and ponds where they do. Magical mess-with-your-mind drek.]<<<<<

—Findler-Man (21:01:20/3-5-54)

>>>>>[If you can do it, why not? Probably easier and cheaper to throw up an illusion and then quicken it (or maybe use a spell lock, I don't know) than do some heavy-duty renovation and landscaping. If you've got a mage on the staff, you can change the way your house looks—inside and out—every time you get bored with it. Or every time you're throwing a bash. "No, no, George, the Whatsits have *seen* us in that garden before..."]<<<<<

—Estevan (09:11:31/3-7-54)

>>>>>[Don't underestimate the security potential as well. If you're using that much illusion magic, make all the spells physical, not mana, and turn those machine gun nests into bird nests. You can hide the roads, or make "new" ones. People who don't know the real layout might follow the "road" over a cliff, into a pit, or into a stand of trees]<<<<<

—Aurora (13:00:10/3-7-54)

>>>>>[I agree with you, Aurora, but the elves of the Hill don't seem to do the magic trip for security; they do it for swank—sheer keeping-

up-with-the-Joneses. You prove you've got clout through the lavish, even flagrant use of magic. It's just another form of conspicuous consumption.]<<<<<

—People Watcher (02 27 57/3-10-54)

>>>>>[I saw one of the slickest magical "spiffs" at a party thrown by the Fitzhenry brood. Their *nouveau*-Gothic mausoleum—er, house—has these stone griffins on the *faux* turrets over the front doorway. (Yes, they're real stone—I checked.) The night of the party, though, the things rattled their wings and hissed angrily at the guests as they arrived. Truly wiz—whoever the mage was, his illusion was perfect.]<<<<<

—Walpurgisnacht (16:31:32/3-16-54)

>>>>>[How'd *you* get into the party, Val?]<<<<<

—Armstrong (13:09:19/3-17-54)

>>>>>[One of their regular catering people came down with food poisoning, poor dear. They went to a temp agency, and I got the nod—what a coincidence.]<<<<<

—Walpurgisnacht (17:00:16/3-17-54)

>>>>>[Good thing you chose the Fitzhenrys' place for your party crashing, Val. If you'd tried Ehran's estate, you wouldn't be around to talk about it. He's got a bunch of fragging *vampires* as retainers. Chip-truth.]<<<<<

—Emmy (15:37:53/3-26-54)

>>>>>[Bulldrek! And what's with this sudden plague of vampires anyway? We've got 'em in the fragging subway, we got 'em in Ehran's estate...Next you're going to tell me a vampire sits on the Council of Princes]<<<<<

—Raven (23.10:03/3-29-54)

>>>>>[I dunno, Raven. Have *you* ever seen Prince Dar Varien by light of day.. ?]<<<<<

—Dynamit (02:49:21/3-30-54)

>>>>>[Somebody way back mentioned Sean Laverty's place in passing, but didn't follow up. For those who don't know, Laverty's estate blatantly violates Tir Tairngire law and the martial law of Portland. His Portland Heights area estate *straddles* the Wall. The house and about half his lands are inside the Wall, and he's got his *own private gate* through the Wall, leading to the rest of his estate Fences, sensor arrays, land mines and security patrols surround the whole thing.

The point is, the laws say every property must be either inside or outside the Wall Shows you just how influential the guy really is.]<<<<<

—Mungo Jerry (06:02:43/4-2-54)

>>>>>[Lofwyr the dragon keeps an estate in the Royal Hill area It's small compared to the other Council Princes' estates, but he doesn't spend much time there anyway—the place is more for show and entertaining than anything else. His *real* home seems to be a large cave complex in the Tualatin Hills—in what used to be the Nature Park before secession.]<<<<<

—Liz (12:14.48/4-5-54)

>>>>>[What's the place like?]<<<<<

—Ritzo (23 01:39/4-6-54)

>>>>>[Frag if I know. Security's cosmically tight—no pansy-hooped Knight Errant patrols, we're talking fragging *gargoyles* and drek like that. I don't know *anyone* who's made it in and out again.]<<<<<

—Liz (11:58 50/4-9-54)

THE HILL AND THE PALACE

At the center of the region referred to as Royal Hill lies the Royal Hill itself, a sharp, abrupt prominence that appears to be a recent addition to the region's topography.

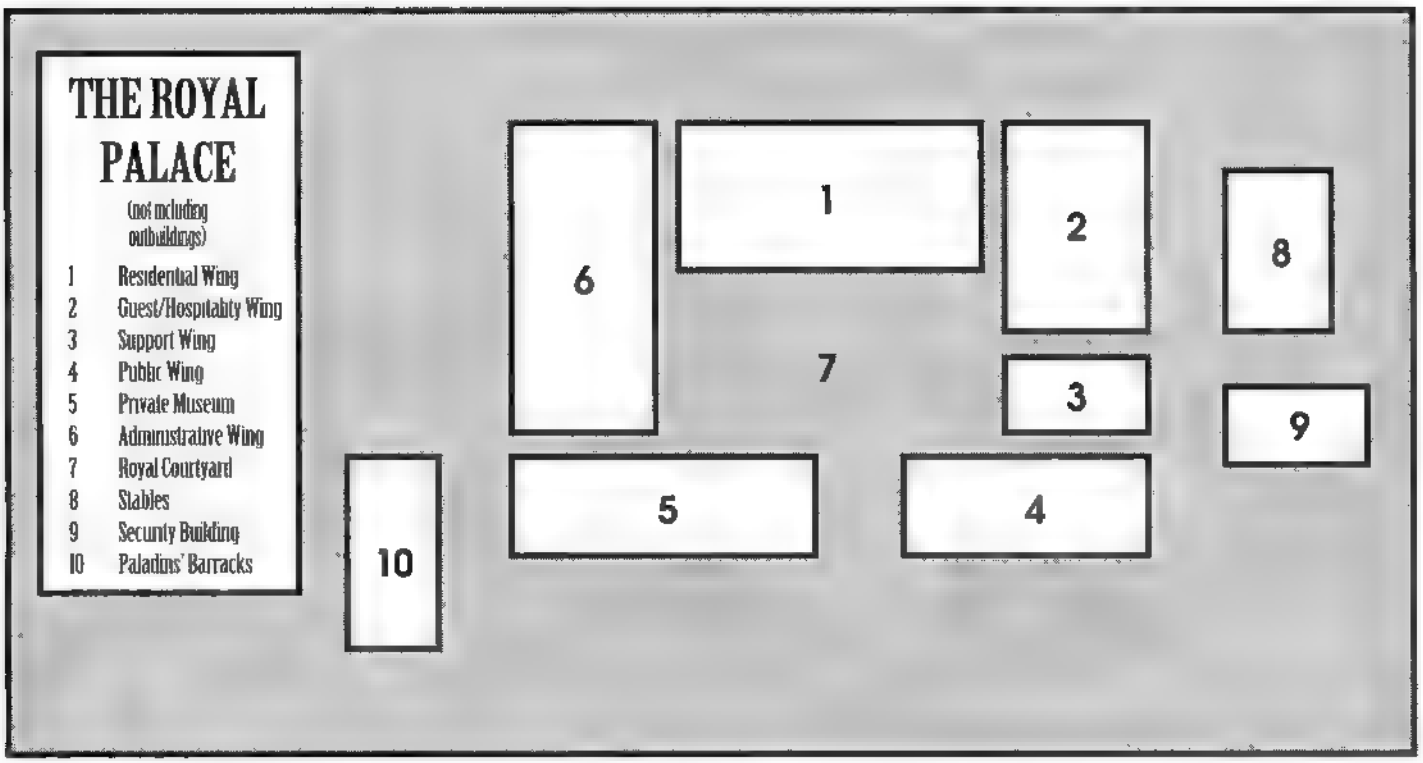
>>>>>[That's because it *is* a recent addition. The Royal Hill itself didn't exist until 2037, when someone, or something created it using magic.]<<<<<

—Davitt (02:53:26/2-28-54)

>>>>>[Unadulterated bulldrek. No mage alive wields that much power.]<<<<<

—Zotz (22:42:29/3-2-54)

>>>>>[I got two things to say to that. First, check some old geodetic survey maps dating from before 2037 and see if you can find Royal Hill. It just wasn't there. Second, compared with simultaneously



blowing a whole fragging string of volcanoes, building a little fragging hill seems like null perspiration.]<<<<<
—Davitt (04:43:44/3-3-54)

>>>>>[Well, the combined power of the entire Great Ghost Dance set off the volcanoes. But point taken anyway.]<<<<<
—Mayes (10:39:28/3-5-54)

About three kilometers in diameter at its base, the roughly circular hill rises 250 meters above the surrounding terrain. The Royal Palace, the capital of Tir Tairngire and the home and working office of the High Prince, sits atop the Royal Hill.

A magnificent complex, the palace sprawls over one square kilometer. Its slender, graceful towers and spires, visible from within the city, seem to burn with a brilliant red fire in the last rays of the setting sun. Ten main buildings and twice that number of smaller outbuildings make up the complex. The High Prince and his family live in the Residential Wing, the largest and most impressive building. The Private Museum, where Lugh Surehand's personal collection of artwork resides, is only slightly less magnificent. The Public Wing holds the National Collection—artwork that belongs to the High Prince holding office, not to Lugh Surehand personally.

>>>>>[Public Wing, yeah right. You can be fragging sure Ma and Pa Kettle, the orks from Duluth, aren't going to enjoy the artworks there. Maybe if you can get into the Royal Hill area, onto the Hill itself and within 50 meters of the palace complex, all without being arrested, eaten, blown up or shot full of holes—maybe then you can see the "public" collection. Maybe.]<<<<<
—Simmons (13.13 54/2-27-54)

>>>>>[It's worth stressing: you won't find tighter security anywhere. You'd find it easier to assassinate the UCAS president in his bed with a blunt butterknife than to sneak into the Royal Palace.]<<<<<
—Olympus (15:17:42/3-2-54)

>>>>>[The High Prince does most of his pomp-and-circumstance drek in the Royal Courtyard in the middle of the complex. Trideo teams aren't allowed into the area to televise the events. Instead, palace staff technicians use state-of-the-art equipment to cover the events, providing real-time feeds to both national networks. The networks super their own talking heads on top and pretend it's all their own show.]<<<<<
—Layton (21:01:13/3-6-54)

>>>>>[Before we leave the Portland area, I'd like to make a remark about the outlying regions.

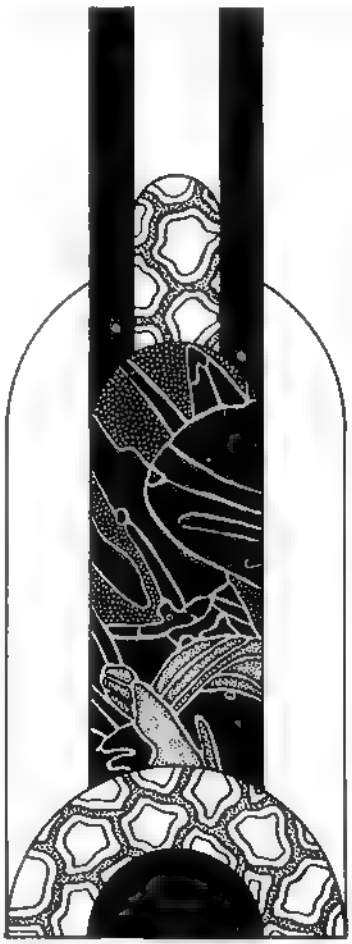
On a recent trip to Tir Tairngire, I had occasion to look at a map of the Portland area. Lo and behold, I spotted a somewhat notable region outside the Wall—namely, one Wankers' Corner. (I drek you not—check the map.) I've had occasion to visit *Speakers'* Corner in London and so decided to give this place a wide berth, but...

My curiosity, however, remains quite honestly...aroused. Is this Wankers' Corner a hotbed of incompetence and differentially developed biceps? And what's the chamber of tourism slogan—"Where you always have a friend to hand?" "Come again?" "Practice safe sex—wear a glove?"]<<<<<
—Harker (16:20:27/3-17-54)

>>>>>[Let me guess—Harker's a Brit, right?]<<<<<
—Bung (23:08:34/3-18-54)

PARK 'N' CHARGE
ELECTRIC VEHICLE PARKING ONLY
STEVIE RAY LIVES!
ORCS OUT NOW!

SALEM



VITAL STATISTICS

Population: 95,200

Human:	1%
Elf:	85%
Dwarf:	7%
Ork:	5%
Troll:	Negligible
Other:	2%

Density in Populated Districts: 540 per square kilometer
Per Capita Income: 41,000¥
Below Poverty Level: 5%
Persons Rated on Fortune's Active Traders List: 5%
Persons of Megacorporate Affiliation: 6%
Persons of Tir Tairngire-based Corporate Affiliation: 38%
Felonious Crime Rate: 5 per 1,000 per annum
Education:
High School Equivalency: 41%
College Equivalency: 30%
Advanced Studies Certificates: 20%
Hospitals: 5

>>>>>[Again, potentially useful tourist drek.]<<<<<
—Captain Chaos (09:18:01/2-25-54)

GOVERNMENT

Salem's civic government comprises a mayor and seven *reves*, or aldermen The Council of Princes directly appoints the mayor and reviews the appointment every four years in the absence of any interim crises. Voters select the seven *reves* every two years through a citywide general election. Any Tir Tairngire subject who has lived in Salem for five or more years can have his name placed on the next ballot, provided he obtains 1,000 signatures of Salem residents on a petition of nomination. The seven nominees with the highest number of votes in the election become *reves*. Election as a *reve* brings with it an annual salary of 50,000 nuyen. Strict conflict-of-interest rules prevent a *reve* from profiting from his position.

The mayor chairs the Civic Council, which comprises the *reves*. Generally, the entire council votes on all decisions. Even though he acts as the chairman, the mayor may vote on any initiative; his vote carries a weighting of six. As chairman, he also decides all ties. Thus, all reves must vote against the mayor to overrule his decisions. At any time, the mayor may invoke his "mayoral privilege," which removes a decision from the

jurisdiction of the other council members. The mayor alone decides when to use mayoral privilege, but must justify any such declaration to the Council of Princes. If they deem his declaration inappropriate, they may remove him from office.

>>>>>[How likely do you think *that* is? The mayor is the Princes' lapdog in the first place, otherwise he wouldn't *be* mayor. Don't think he's going to bite the hands that feed him by doing something the Princes wouldn't approve of. Another example of how "democracy" in the Tir is a sham, shamelessly manipulated by the Council of Princes]<<<<<
—Jackson (15:55.48/3-18-54)

The current mayor is Celinne Barbeau, who has held office for the past five years.

>>>>>[Celinne Barbeau—a Québecoise elf who came to the Tir in 2047 after the National Assembly booted her for conflict of interest She was a hardcore member of the *Alliance Metahumaine*—a virulently anti-human group masquerading as a pro-metahuman party—so she fits in just fine down here.

Barbeau's in her 30s, but she looks like she's maybe 18—slender, wavy blonde hair, eyes so blue it's sickening. Her quiet, high-pitched voice sounds like all it's good for is giggling...until she gets into a debate. Then she's a firebrand. Most people initially dismiss her because of her looks She often plays on that, hitting them with a nasty surprise later.]<<<<<
—Erica L (04:16.37/3-2-54)

The last *reve* election was held in 2051, meaning that the current Civic Council members hold their seats until May, 2054. The current *reves* are Marta Morgenstern, Sam Virtue, David Buckley, Bob Sinclair, Rino Elverhoy, Albion Foss, and Iija Tatras.

>>>>>[As with Portland, I'll give you my best reading on level of enforcement.

	Security Rating
Downtown: Middle Class	**A-B**
Keizer: Middle Class	**B**
Hayesville: Upper Class	**A**
Four Corners: Upper Class	**AA-A**
Liberty: Luxury Class	**AAA**
West Salem: Upper Class	**A**
Eola: Lower Class	**B-C**

You'll note there are no "squatter" zones in Salem at all.]<<<<<
—SPD (11.47 25/2-17-54)

>>>>>[True, but Eola has some parts that are definitely the lowest of the lower class.]<<<<<
—Titus (21:50.40/2-19-54)

PLACES OF INTEREST

HOTELS

The Capitol

Luxury Hotel Archetype (8 floors)/Center Street Northeast and State Street Northeast/Trish Aleta, Manager/Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 3503 (26-1042).

By far Salem's most luxurious hotel, The Capitol offers large and opulently furnished rooms. The atrium/lobby is a triumph of Tir Tairngire design.

>>>>>[Who stays here? The cheapest room in the place is 400¥ a night, and the price goes *way* up from there, let me tell you.]<<<<<
—Loree (16:36:57/2-29-54)

>>>>>[Believe it or not, Loree, *I* have. When you're ducking the heat, everybody expects you to dive for the shadows. So do what *nobody* expects. Dust off your best fake ID and live high on the hog until the heatwave dies down (or until your credstick's blank). If I'm going to hole up, I can't think of many better places than the Capitol.]<<<<<
—Mungo Jerry (21:38·20/3-7-54)

>>>>>[You might even pull it off *without* the fake ID. The buzz I hear says the manager, Trish Aleta, supplements her pension fund by supplying services of all kinds to anyone who'll pay. Just slip her some dinero and she'll cover for you. Whether or not she *stays* bought is another matter, of course.]<<<<<
—Vanderdecken (04 58·25/3-9-54)

Bush Pasture Hotel

Average Hotel Archetype (11 floors)/Mission Street and Liberty Street South/Armin Massey, Manager/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 3503 (22-3260).

An attractive, relatively economical hotel located on the outskirts of the downtown core, the Bush Pasture is a favorite among business travelers. The hotel has a pleasant wine bar on the ground floor, called the Bush Pasture.

>>>>>[Regulars, familiar with the pickup action on Friday nights, call it the *Bull* Pasture. If you like drinking lousy wines out of good bottles while hitting on elven secretaries—or watching suits do the same—this is your place.]<<<<<
—Borka (10 30 45/3-15-54)

>>>>>[The real entertainment's in the back room, where you can catch the bar manager taking six-liter vats of grape-flavored paint thinner and transferring the drek into empty bottles of fine vintages]<<<<<
—Oenophile (23:43:58/3-19-54)

>>>>>[If you approach him right, the bar manager—Denis Shea—can deal you more than foul wine. His selection of BTLs is first-rate. Unfortunately, I hear Shea's begun sampling the merchandise and is starting to fray a little at the edges.]<<<<<
—Monseigneur (04·52:23/3-22-54)

>>>>>[The Holman Wayside

Average Hotel Archetype (2 floors)/Highway 22 and Doaks Ferry Road Southwest/Jennifer Fjellgaard, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 3503 (16-3885).

The Wayside's probably the closest thing to a flophouse you'll find in Salem. It's not dirty or dangerous, but it *is* small and inexpensive, and the staff (and most of the guests) don't ask questions. The Wayside has no restaurant or coffee shop, but you

can go cross the highway to Mike's, a good 'ol bolt-and-puke truck stop.]<<<<<

—Borka (10 32:07/3-15-54)

>>>>>[The owner, Jenny Fjellgaard, used to be a corporate combat medic—did two tours in the Desert Wars. Then she ran the shadows under the handle Doctor Feelgood. She doesn't do runs any more—ask her about her cybereyes, and why her left cheek doesn't move right when she smiles, if you want to know why. She *does* keep in contact with Salem's small shadow community, and she'll turn you onto other runners if she trusts you. And if you get chewed, odds are she'll stitch you back up.]<<<<<

—Plato (01:53:10/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Not you, Plato, may you rot in hell.]<<<<<

—Dr. Feelgood (00:11:39/3-26-54)

RESTAURANTS AND BARS

Incabulos

Mid-Size Restaurant Archetype/Ground floor of The Capitol hotel/Mark Yunker, Manager/Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 3503 (26-1020)

Incabulos' dark, sophisticated decor matches the opulence of The Capitol hotel. Subtly arranged indirect lighting gently illuminates each table, fine elven artwork hangs on the walls. Prices are high—an average of 45 nuyen for an entrée—but connoisseurs consider the diverse, eclectic menu the finest in Salem

>>>>>[This place has a dress code, but I haven't quite figured it out. I *think* you've got to dress like you can buy the place, then the maitre d' will seat you. If you do get in, it's a great place for a meet with a high-toned Johnson. Each table has its own white-noise generator, and magical barriers surrounding the whole place prevent astral eavesdropping (and exclude those pesky watcher spirits). Don't start trouble—the sec-guards will finish it, right quick.]<<<<<

—Borka (10:34:48/3-15-54)

>>>>>[Officially, Mark Yunker, the manager, reports to Trish Aleta, manager of The Capitol.. and he hates it. I hear he's collecting dirt on Trish's extracurricular activities. I don't know if he's planning to blackmail her or just get her ousted]<<<<<

—Bridge (23:09:53/3-17-54)

The Pantry

Large Restaurant Archetype/Turner Road Southeast and Mission Street/Chelan Sawatski, Owner/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 3503 (67-8588).

The Pantry is a pleasant, family-style restaurant near the airport. Inside it resembles a 20th-century farm kitchen, with stone fireplaces and wooden furniture. The owner, "Mother" Sawatski, frequently greets guests in the evening, wearing a vintage cotton dress and looking like a portly, rosy-cheeked farmer's wife. The restaurant's known for good food and good value.

>>>>>[That warm and fuzzy farmer's wife—"Mother" Chelan Sawatski—holds major shares in Intercoastal Shipping Corp., the shell company for one of the Tir's biggest crime corporations. Nothing illegal goes down on Sawatski's property—she makes fragging sure of that—but her money is definitely dirty, if that bothers you any.]<<<<<

—Margaux (07:04 04/2-26-54)

>>>>>[All of which makes her a great "in" into Intercoastal and the BTL trade, if that's what you're after.]<<<<<

—Bridge (23:40:34/3-13-54)

Martin's

Mid-Size Restaurant Archetype/Broadway Northeast and Salem Parkway/Andrew Milne, Owner/Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 3503 (22-4722)

The "chefs" are actually mages, who produce illusory food for those who enjoy the experience of dining but wish to avoid the calories.

>>>>>[How fragging superficial and ridiculous can you get? Only a slotted-up culture could produce a place like this.]<<<<<

—Karen C (19:51:56/3-30-54)

>>>>>[Do they take "illusory" money?]<<<<<

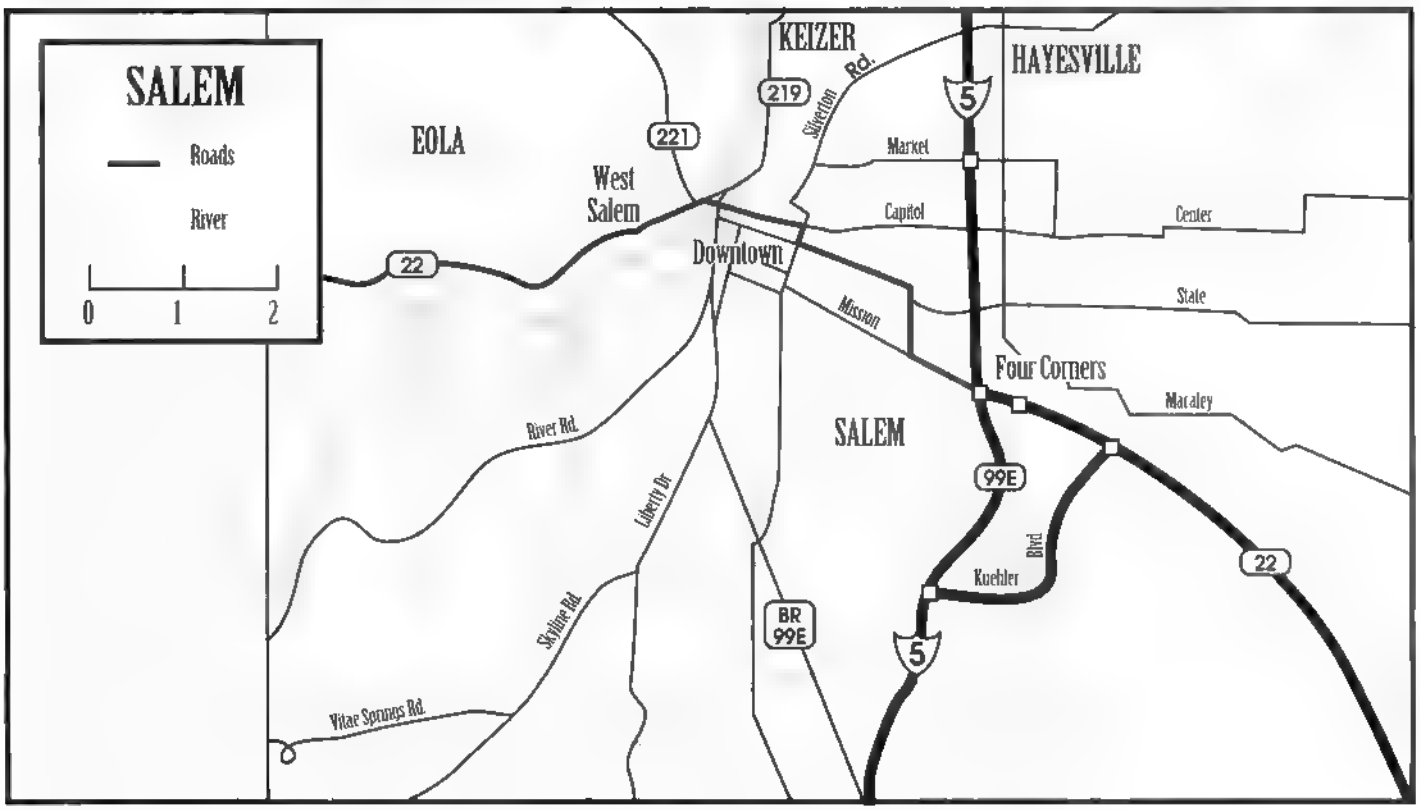
—Teller (01:37:12/4-08-54)

NIGHTCLUBS

Chrome Rat

Night Club Archetype/Capitol Street and State Street Northeast/Kate Hiscox, Owner/Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 3503 (15-4210).

Salem's largest and hippest nightclub, the Chrome Rat spe-



cializes in live chrome-rock, although other types of bands occasionally play the club's large stage.

>>>>>[A see-and-be-seen place. The Rat's just a musical wasteland full of posers. People actually stand in line to be *seen* standing in line, not to hear the music. Like anywhere else, the *real* music goes down in the moldy little backrooms you enter from the alley—if you know the troll working the door, that is.]<<<<<
—Russel (14:02:04/2-27-54)

>>>>>[Okay, you're right, the attitude quotient is so thick at the Rat you could fraggin slice it with a knife. But don't be so quick to dis the tunes. Remember back in '51 when Concrete Dreams did one of their famous drop-ins at the Rat? The local chromeheads damn near had aneurysms. And last year, Til Es Hault played *three nights* here. Everywhere else in the fragging *world*, they played to sold-out stadiums]<<<<<
—Derek (17:00:16/3-2-54)

>>>>>[I was there. Those dandelion-eaters wailed. Too bad they only sing in Sperethiel; I'd have liked to know what the frag they were singing about.]<<<<<
—Octo (03:42 44/3-9-54)

>>>>>[**Graceland**
Night Club Archetype/Commercial Street Southeast and Liberty Street South/Brass Nykl, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 3503 (67-2333).

One of the moldy little backrooms that would gladden the soul of Russel, the slotting music snob. It's like a trideo director's idea of a hip nightclub—everybody's dressed in black, brimming with angst, a troll works the door, and yes, you *do* have to know him (or fast-talk him) to get in, and yes, the entrance *is* off an alley behind a dumpster.

Most of the bands that play Graceland confuse earnestness and sincerity with competence. These slags *believe*—too bad they can't play.

Once in a very long time you run into a band that's got its chops down *and* has something to say. Don't miss them; you can bet they won't be playing at Graceland for long.]<<<<<
—Rabbit (23 57 00/3-11-54)

>>>>>[The owner, Brass Nykl (what a *great* pseudonym) used to buddy up with Allenby, the dwarf who owned Caravan in Seattle (before he got himself geeked) They had a falling out because Nykl thought *he* had a contract to manage The Shadows. Of course, those novastars went with Allenby, and Nykl has been eating his liver over it ever since.]<<<<<
—Nixie (10:55:58/3-14-54)

>>>>>[**THE Sports Bar**
Bar Archetype/Pringle Road and 12th Street Southeast/Larry Gunn, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 3503 (19 9092).

The trideo screens—including one monster almost three meters across—makes this one of the city's most popular watering holes, especially during hurling season. Don't ask for fancy vintages, coolers or any of that drek, because THE Sports Bar (don't forget the capital letters!) is a shot-and-a-beer kind of place. A great place to talk hurling (or schmooze people *by* talking hurling), the bar also serves good, basic bar muck: burgers, dogs, wings and nachos. Remember that hurling's the Tir's great equalizer, and so you'll find people of just about every rank and file of life in here, from samarimen

and suitgirls to scroffy shadowrunner wannabes.]<<<<<
—Muir (18 46.32/3-18-54)

>>>>>[The owner, Larry Gunn, used to be one of the biggest stars on the Salem Kinsmen until a couple of years back, when he blew his left knee one too many times. If you're into the game, or if you just want to get on Larry's good side, ask him about what the NHA used to be like. Do *not* get on his bad side. Even with a trick knee, he's a fragging terror in a scrap, plus he's got an autoloading riot gun under the bar in case of "disagreements."]<<<<<
—California Hot (00.06·41/3-19-54)

>>>>>[Gunn didn't quit because of his knee. It was quit or be banned. The slag's a physical adept, the league found out and called him on it. (It's not *strictly* illegal, but it's something they want to avoid—too many fatalities, too expensive for the owners and league alike.) He's tight with some of the top players in hurling, and I hear he's taken one or two of the up-and-comers under his wing to help them "refine" their mayhem.]<<<<<
—Lifeguard (06·35 53/3-19-54)

>>>>>**[The Icepick**
Bar Archetype/Portland Road and Silverton Road/Patricia Driscoll-Bell, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 3503 (56-6666).

Just a little hole-in-the-wall, but if you stop in, you'll find the clientele to be a little less...*robust* than in a lot of Salem taverns. The conversation's a lot more esoteric, and you might even go an entire evening without hearing somebody talk about hurling. More likely you'll hear about Matrix runs and the latest masking utilities, as the 'Pick is the preferred haunt of Salem's small but close-knit decker community. The owner, Patty Driscoll-Bell, got her start in Portland as an icebreaker extraordinaire, under the street handle DeciBelle (dB, get it?). I don't think she punches deck anymore, but she certainly knows people who do.]<<<<<
—TS (23:37:03/3-24-54)

OTHER LOCATIONS

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Civic Council Building
Summer Street Northeast and Marion Street/LTG# 3503 (33-3960).

The mayor and the *reves* of the Civic Council meet here. A small detachment of the Peace Force constabulary provides tight security.

>>>>>[The security's for the mayor, not the *reves*. When the mayor's not in the building, security's a joke, when she's around, the badges swarm the place like it's a top-secret corporate lab. Still, it's nothing compared to the security around her home in Liberty—serious drek, chummer.]<<<<<
—Yaya (12·41:45/2-28-54)

Chamber of Representatives
Center Street Northeast and Capitol Street/LTG# 3503 (33-3000).

The Star Chamber meets in this large, ornate building. It also houses the civil service infrastructure that supports the Chamber of Representatives.

>>>>>[For something as important sounding as the "Chamber of Representatives," you'd expect pretty fragging heavy security, wouldn't you? Think again. Quite a few Peace Force guards patrol the grounds, but if you look close you'll see they're all green recruits pulling "make-work" duty, and they're armed for drek. It's all ceremonial. The *reves* at the Civic Council Building get more protection than the representatives, and that isn't very fragging much—which tells you how important the Star Chamber *really* is in the grand scheme of things, doesn't it? Fragging ugly building, too.]<<<<<
—Yaya (12·43:03/2 28-54)

>>>>>[It's not necessarily *that* bad. Maybe the Council of Princes doesn't believe the people would harm their own representatives.]<<<<<
—Lo (23.42.23/2-28-54)

>>>>>[Oh come *on*, what planet are you from? "The people" hurt "their" representatives all the time. Ask JFK (and invite me to the séance). The reps don't get protection because they're not worth the effort. Scrag 'em all and the Tir's going to cruise on like nothing happened.]<<<<<
—Yaya (10:58:31/3-1-54)

Hall of Justice
Mission Street and 12th Street Southeast/LTG# 3503 (33 3135).

Like the building of the same name in Portland, the city's magistrates hear civil and criminal cases here. The building also houses the headquarters of the city's Peace Force constabulary and holding cells in the basement.

>>>>>[You'll find the main headquarters of the Netwatch Matrix cops here as well.]<<<<<
—Bit Basher (07 47·15/3-6-54)

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Memorial Hospital

Hospital Archetype (10 floors)/Mission Street between Liberty Street South and 12th Street Southeast/Kai Malecot, Chief Administrator/LTG# 3503 (19-4479).

Salem's largest and most sophisticated hospital, Memorial receives patients transferred from throughout the central region of the nation.

>>>>>[Memorial's the place to go if you need non-cyber replacement. In fact, they're probably the best in the world at vat work.]<<<<<
—Kent (09 26 34/2-16-54)

>>>>>[If you're a mage or shaman, it's the *only* place to go. Most of the docs understand that invasive procedures can slot with the magic, and tread carefully with magically adept patients. (If they *know* the patients are magically adept, of course...)]<<<<<
—Carruthers (16.42.00/3-4-54)

Salem Hospital

Hospital Archetype (4 floors)/Center Street Northeast, near Highway 5/Margaret Brooksbank, Chief Administrator/LTG# 3503 (19-4533)

Once a private hospital, Salem Hospital has only recently come under the umbrella of Tir Tairngire's Medical Services Plan.

>>>>>[Salem was *forced* under it. The hospital was in fine financial shape, catering to rich elves willing to pay the full tab for the low spot on a waiting list (Can you imagine *waiting* for bypass surgery? Constantly listening to your heart, waiting for it to go "squish" for the last time?) A lot of the medicos make *much* less under MSP billing than they did under private billing, and some are performing "unsanctioned" procedures, using the hospital's facilities to make up the shortfall. To at least some extent, Salem Hospital has become one big body shop...]<<<<<
—Alchemy (16 09·33/3-1-54)

>>>>>[You're exaggerating, chummer. Some docs—like maybe three—have gone that route. Most are straight-arrow. Which makes the trick picking out *which* three docs do the shadow-cutting.]<<<<<
—Carruthers (16 42.59/3-5-54)

MISCELLANEOUS

Royal Coliseum

Near Mission Street, in the Bush Pasture Park/LTG# 3503 (48-4885) (Box Office).

This hurling stadium occupies the site of the old McCulloch Stadium. The coliseum seats only 18,000, providing a more "intimate" view of the game than in Portland's Civic Stadium.

Willamette University

Near Capitol Street and Center Street/Rolf Rector, Registrar/LTG# 3503 (72-4577) (Registrar's Office).

Famed throughout the world for its supremacy in the field of biogenetic engineering, Willamette attracts students from many other countries The newly renovated campus has a charming retro-nostalgic look, with ivy-covered, red-brick buildings, meandering streams, and narrow walking paths.

>>>>>[It looks like some kind of freakish cross between an elf's take on Cambridge and a Disneyland version of Harvard.]<<<<<
—Manx (09 06 57/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Willamette boasts some of the world's most advanced high-tech research equipment and computers in its underground research labs. If you need some cutting-edge equipment, for whatever purpose, Willamette is the place to "acquire" it.]<<<<<
—Lady Ace (08 04:41/3-5-54)

>>>>>[Willamette also houses the Bureau of Standards—that's the outfit that handles the bureaucratic testing side of the Rite of Progression, *plus* worker testing and certification. Want to be a Royal-class technoweenie? The Bureau of Statistics—lovingly called the BS—can make it happen. The BS occupies a tall office block at the south end of campus. You can't miss it—it's called "the waffle," for reasons immediately evident to anyone who sees it.]<<<<<
—Tallyrand (12:13:47/3-6-54)

>>>>>[**Northwest Casino**
Casino Archetype/Lancaster Drive and Market Street Northeast/Horst Von Helmot, Manager/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 3503 (46-3777)

The casino is an experiment by the government. Aside from hurling wagers, long-standing laws strictly prohibit gambling in the Tir. Despite this prohibition, extensive gambling operations have flourished—most of them run where the sun doesn't shine. After realizing how large this gambling "shadow economy" actually was, the government decided to help itself to a piece of the pie—hence the Northwest Casino.

The casino is the Tir's sole government-run, legal gambling establishment. The games are all clean, with the house's percentage plainly advertised for each game. You can come here and play roulette, blackjack, poker, keno, craps, and various electronic variants, all with government-sanctioned caps on the stakes. The big benefit is knowing that if you break the bank the management isn't going to send kneebreakers after you to extract your winnings from your whining body.]<<<<<
—Sid (00:02:39/3-7-54)

>>>>>[The manager, Horst Von Helmot, has held his job for only the past two months. The original manager, Mac Astely, just kinda faded two months back. It seems he was skimming, to the tune of maybe 25k¥ a month, and the government didn't like it. Nobody knows where Astely went or what happened to him. Predictably, Von Helmot is playing things *very* clean.]<<<<<
—Roc (02:32:44/3-9-54)

>>>>>[Not so. True, he's not skimming, but he's running his *own* games out of the back. Table-stakes poker, and some really shady big-stakes games of other kinds.]<<<<<
—Sandman (23:40:19/3-9-54)

>>>>>[**Electric Ladyland**
Body Shop Archetype/Lancaster Drive and State Street/Alan Akerstream, Owner-Surgeon/No Racial Bias/LTG# 3503 (49-1999)

Located in a strip mall out in Four Corners, Ladyland advertises itself as a "purveyor of cosmetic makeovers." Dr. Akerstream's a dab hand at tummy tucks, liposuction, breast reduction/augmentation, rhinoplasty, all the normal cosmetic cutting. But the good doc also offers implanted iris modifications if you want to permanently change your eye color, permanent skin tinting and dying, hair implants, tattoos and "permanent makeup," "skin grooming" (where he permanently changes the texture and/or finish of your skin; ever wanted to have iridescent skin?), and many other flashy procedures that rockers, gutterpunks and gangers pay big credit for. All legal, if a little distasteful.

But Akerstream makes his real mega-nuyen by catering to the chromed crowd. He's got contacts who supply him with drek-hot cyberware of all makes and models—eyes, limbs, headware implants, you name it. Akerstream doesn't know where the toys come from, and I don't think he *wants* to know—the truth might be too disturbing. Anyway, for the right price Akerstream will acquire and install just about any kind of bodmod you want, without any "bureaucratic entanglements," licensing problems, or any other bulldrek. He's also a very good cutter.]<<<<<
—March Hare (11:10:42/3-15-54)

>>>>>[When he's sober]<<<<<
—Big Ben (14:01:06/3-18-54)

EUGENE

VITAL STATISTICS

Population: 110,000

Human:	1%
Elf:	90%
Dwarf:	5%
Ork:	2%
Troll:	Negligible
Other:	2%

Density in Populated Districts: 500 per square kilometer
Per Capita Income: 40,000¥
Below Poverty Level: 6%
Persons Rated on Fortune's Active Traders List: 2%
Persons of Megacorporate Affiliation: 4%
Persons of Tir Tairngire-based Corporate Affiliation: 39%
Felonious Crime Rate: 6 per 1,000 per annum
Education:
High School Equivalency: 46%
College Equivalency: 29%
Advanced Studies Certificates: 19%
Hospitals: 7

>>>>>[Yep, more Tour Guide stuff.]<<<<<
—Captain Chaos (10:01:55/2-25-54)

GOVERNMENT

The civic government of Eugene follows the same structure as that of Salem. The civic council comprises the mayor —selected by the Council of Princes—and seven *reves*, chosen in citywide elections. The current mayor is Malcolm Jenice-Goodine, who has held office since 2049.

>>>>>[Nobody around here knows drek about Jenice-Goodine. Nobody in Eugene had ever seen him until he was invested as mayor. I've tried to track his history, but couldn't get any further back than 2047, when he came to Eugene from god-knows-where But he seems like a pretty good administrator, and his relationship with his *reves* is a lot less adversarial than Mayor Barbeau and the Salem council's.]<<<<<
—Allyn (10:24:09/3-15-54)

>>>>>[That's because Eugene managed to elect a council of brain-dead, pansy-hooped mabels without an opinion between them. Jenice-Goodine goes, "Don't you think this is a good idea?" and they go, "Yessir, yessir, yessir " Frag, they'd vote for their own executions if J-G told them it was a good idea.]<<<<<
—Whitehot (01:42:04/3-23-54)

Eugene held its last *reve* election in 2051, so the current civic council will hold their seats until May, 2054. The current *reves* are Stefanie Orlowski, Jan Houde, Carole Hegedos, Ken Janske, Betty Scott, Chuck Pogue and Der-Hoy Yi.

>>>>>[Here are my estimates of the law enforcement ratings for the different areas of Eugene.

	Security Rating
Downtown: Middle Class	A-B
Santa Clara: Lower Class	C-D
Oakway: Luxury Class	AAA
Springfield: Middle Class	B
Skinners Butte: Squatter	D
Amazon Park: Upper Class	A

Again, don't quote me on any of this stuff.]<<<<<
—SPD (12:01:13/3-17-54)

PLACES OF INTEREST

HOTELS

Oakway Lodge

Luxury Hotel Archetype (4 floors)/Country Club Road near Delta Highway/Mark Therrien, Manager/Strong Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 5503 (38-1566).

By far the most opulent hotel in the Eugene area, the Oakway Lodge overlooks the private Oakway Country Club golf course, located in the luxury suburb of the same name. Guests at the hotel are considered "honorary members" of the country club during their stay, entitling them to play golf.

>>>>>[Entitling them to pay the 120¥ green fees, you mean.]<<<<<
—Hans (10:41:08/3-1-54)

>>>>>[If you like mingling with money, the Oakway's a good place to do it. Dress up, and get that ear-sculpt you were considering...]<<<<<
—Norquist (19:29:20/3-1-54)

Riverside Hotel

Average Hotel Archetype (10 floors)/River Road and Park Avenue/David Lloyd Bak, Manager/Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 5503 (41-6591).

On the shore of the Willamette River, the Riverside is an attractive building in the familiar postmodern style, differentiated with neo-Celtic accents. The hotel offers large and economical rooms, excellent service, and a free shuttle-bus to and from the Mahlon Sweet Airport.

>>>>>[The Riverside prides itself on its totally automated check-in/check-out procedure. Just slot your credstick and go. When you arrive, the system downloads data to your stick, and it becomes your room key. The advantage—nobody on the desk to remember your face.]<<<<<
—Kendo (11:04:23/2-26-54)

>>>>>[Your naiveté disgusts me. Ever hear of closed-circuit videocams, drekbrain? You might not see the security slag on duty, but you can bet *he* sees *you*.]<<<<<
—Sui (23:58:32/3-1-54)

>>>>>[**Hendricks Park Tube Hotel**

Cheap Hotel Archetype (2 floors)/22nd Avenue near Highway 5/Marano Karvanan, Owner/No Racial Bias/LTG# 5503 (22-4454).

A typical coffin hotel layout, good for overnight flops. Security's a little better than you'd expect, and they keep the place surprisingly clean (no mung in the showers).]<<<<<
—Lilith (09:15 42/3-5-54)

>>>>>[**The Roost**

Cheap Hotel Archetype (2 floors)/River Road and 8th Avenue/Tom Thumm (chip-truth), Manager/No Racial Bias/LTG# 5503 (39-7117).

Otherwise known as "The Rack," this place resembles the Hendricks Park Tube Hotel—except the Roost's showers *do* contain mung, and worse. Only the desperate or the certifiably suicidal stay here. Guests frequently "disappear" from the coffins, but the other residents are too brain-fried to notice or care. From what I hear, a

consortium of street butchers and shadow docs in the Skinners Butte area own The Rack. Apparently they use it as a source of spare parts. Take this as a warning, and stay away from it.]<<<<<

—Lilith (09:18:41/3-5-54)

>>>>>[The corollary of "Don't stay in The Rack" is "Don't get bodywork done in Skinners Butte." You don't know where the parts have been.]<<<<<

—Rasta Dub (16:41:28/3-7053)

RESTAURANTS AND BARS

Fireplace Lounge

Mid-Size Restaurant Archetype/Oakway Country Club clubhouse, Country Club Road/Dan Zanko, Manager/Strong Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 5503 (38-1567).

The restaurant for the Oakway Country Club, the Fireplace Lounge is a sophisticated, relaxing environment of wood and roughly chiseled stone. Huge bay windows look out over the 18th hole and the extensive menu is excellent.

>>>>>[He neglects to mention that the Fireplace Lounge is a private restaurant. You've got to be a country club member, the personal guest of a member, or a guest at the Oakway Lodge hotel to get in. Expect to pay upwards of 200¥ for dinner for two, without wine.]<<<<<

—Connie (10 02 42/3-12-54)

Koji

Bar Archetype/Harlow Road and Coburg Road/Ukita Akile, Owner/Slight Bias Against Non-Japanese Non-Elves/LTG# 5503 (24-5600).

"Arguably the finest sushi bar in Tir Tairngire, Koji is a favorite among Tir subjects of Japanese racial stock.

>>>>>[Ukita Akiie is a Japanese elf, built like a pointy-eared sumo wrestler. He doesn't like *gaijin* and shows it by patronizing them over their taste in sushi—you know, "Are you sure you want that? The flavor is challenging for non-Japanese. . .," that kind of drek.]<<<<<

—Kagemusha (10:04:21/2-20-54)

>>>>>[Ukita is also yakuza, through and through. He runs a numbers business and keeps a stable of joytoys of both sexes for sale or rent. I've never seen Ukita up close, but I'd lay heavy odds he's got serious yak tattoos all over his torso.]<<<<<

—Public Eye (13:15:33/2-21-54)

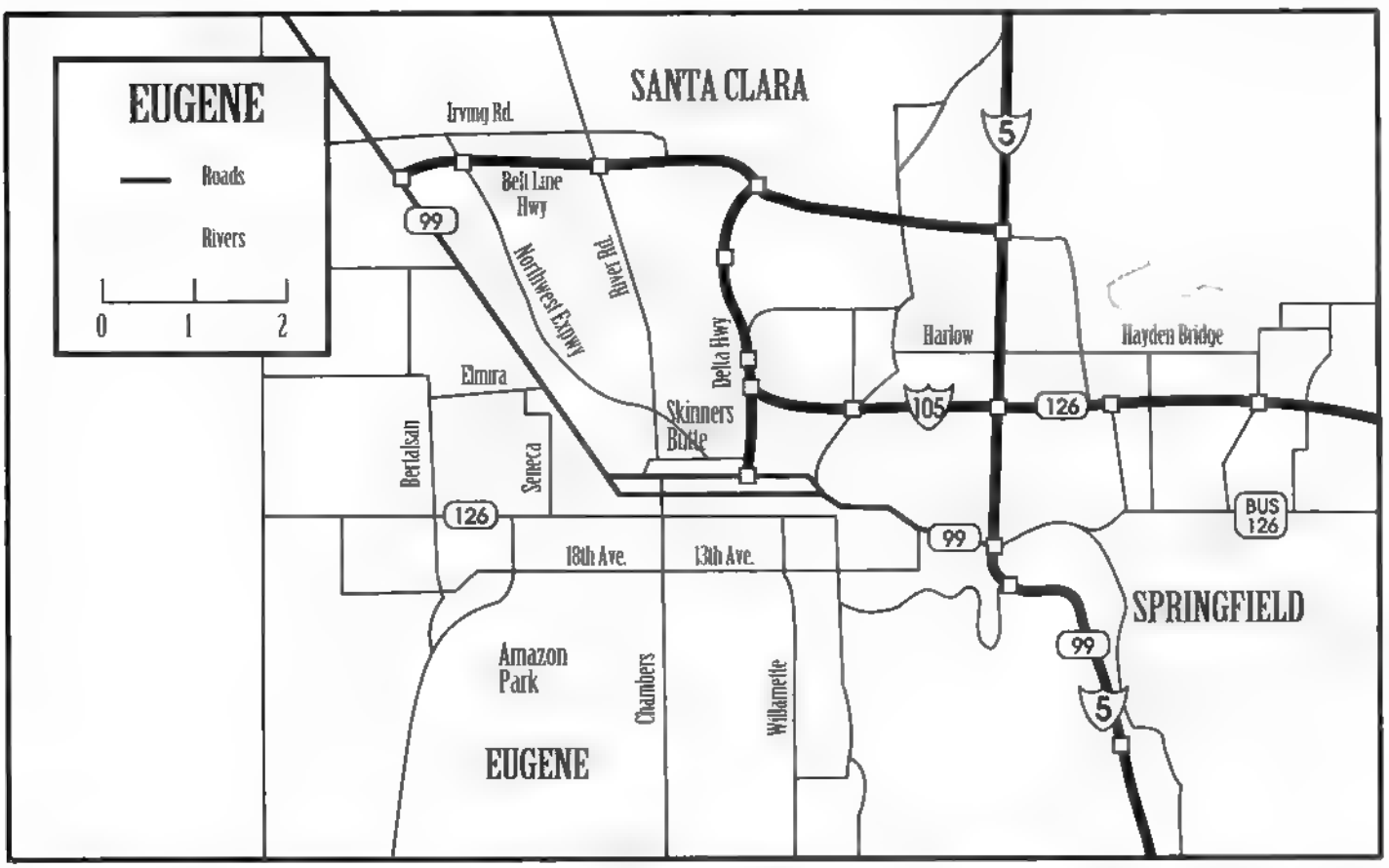
>>>>>[Hoi, give the man a cigar.]<<<<<

—Xaviera (09 26 34/2-26-54)

>>>>>[**Remembrance**

Bar Archetype/Chambers Street and 11th Avenue/Colleen Munro, Owner/Extreme Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 5503 (47-5828).

With a name like Remembrance, you'd probably expect some



kind of aggressively retro, nostalgic decor, right? Actually, Remembrance is a tiny little place with bare walls, interrupted only by the occasional pseudo-Celtic piece of art. I don't know where the name came from.

The place feels more like a private club than a public bar Everybody seems to be a regular, the kind who know each other so well they don't have to talk. You usually find a half-dozen elves sitting around sipping *Taéngele* in comradely silence. It's a weird old place, that's for sure.]<<<<<

—Ostragoth (20 14:41/3-27-54)

NIGHTCLUBS

Orpheum Ballroom

Night Club Archetype/13th Avenue near Willamette Street/ Tobias Wunstorff, Owner/Slight Bias Against Non-Elves/LTG# 5503 (73-9634).

Eugene's largest and most popular live music venue, the Orpheum books acts ranging from the cutting edge of rock to more traditional styles Live bands perform every night of the week, with Tuesdays traditionally dedicated to "environmental music." Sunday's reserved for open jam sessions

>>>>>[Sundays, bring down your ax—whatever it is—and make some noise with the city's hottest musicians.]<<<<<

—Korg (11:33:13/2-27-54)

>>>>>[The owner/manager, Toby Wunstorff, knows *everybody* in town. Corpers, politicos, Royal-rank nitheads, musicians, skagmen, fixers—he knows 'em all. Toby's a great contact to have in your corner.]<<<<<

—Marguerita Monday (07:10:34/3-2-54)

>>>>>[**Tintinus**

I don't know where this place will be when you read this, but today it's in deepest, darkest Skinners Butte just around the corner from The Rack. Tintinus is one of the Tir's best shadow clubs. Totally unlicensed, Tintinus doesn't have to frag with closing times, last calls, or any of that drek. The club floats, setting up in an abandoned warehouse, for example, until the constabulary starts getting suspicious. Then the club just packs up and moves elsewhere. Tintinus doesn't advertise—you can only learn where the club's moved to by word of mouth

Only come to this place if you want to dance. The music's too loud for talking or doing biz. You *can* score, but only if you can mime your pickup lines. The tunes are usually canned—pirate pressings of

live gigs, mostly—but occasionally a live act takes the stage. The music can be just about any style except enviro-drek. (No New Age! Zamfir's dead!)]<<<<<
—Rolf (11:11:52/3-19-54)

OTHER LOCATIONS

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Civic Council Building

11th Avenue near Delta Highway/LTG# 5503 (33-3493).

Much less ornate than its counterpart in Salem, the Eugene Civic Council Building is a square structure built of heavy stone, with few windows

>>>>>[How oppressive must it be working inside?]<<<<<
Beaker (13:09:21/2-23-54)

>>>>>[Security's always tight, whether or not the mayor's actually around.]<<<<<
—Yaya (13.02.31/2-28-54)

Hall of Justice

12th Avenue near Delta Highway/LTG# 5503 (33-3221).

The city's *brehons*, or magistrates, hear civil and criminal cases here. The building also houses the headquarters for the city's Peace Force constabulary, and holding cells in the basement.

>>>>>[Just like in Salem and Portland.]<<<<<
—Skinner (21:21:49/2-24-54)

>>>>>[Not quite. Security is a *little* more lax here. If you *really* wanted to, you'd have an outside chance of springing someone from the pens in the basement, provided you had a good team. Not so in Portland and Salem, believe me. You'd either get scragged or end up joining the would-be escapee.]<<<<<
—Yaya (13:04.23/2-28-54)

Autzen Stadium

Alton Baker Park, near Centennial Boulevard/LTG# 5503 (00-2309) (Box Office).

A 27,000-seat bowl, the home stadium of the Eugene Lords is used almost exclusively for hurling.

>>>>>[The Eugene *Duds*, you mean. That team should be taken out and *shot*. No, strangled—shooting wastes bullets.]<<<<<
—Flynn (18:31:01/3-5-54)

>>>>>[Go Marchers!]<<<<<
—Fennian Fan (16-54:13/3-22-54)

During the off-season, the stadium is sometimes used for large outdoor concerts.

>>>>>[Yeah, usually neo-Celtic noise or "environmental" New-Age drek. The idea of playing that drek in an open stadium, where people who haven't bought tickets can hear it, is environmental pollution of the worst kind, if you ask me.]<<<<<
—Tif (13:20:36/3-16-54)

>>>>>[It's not *that* bad, Tif.]<<<<<
—Astoria (13:20:51/3-16-54)

>>>>>[Oh. . .?]<<<<<
—Tif (13:21:04/3-16-54)

University of Tir Tairngire

Near 13th Avenue and Willamette Street/Kevin McBeath, Registrar/LTG# 5503 (42-8720) (Registrar's Office).

Built on the site of the old University of Oregon, UTT has an international reputation for its advanced postgraduate programs in theoretical and applied thaumaturgy. Independent analysts consider UTT's programs superior even to those offered by MITM

>>>>>[That's because UTT poached away a couple of MITM's major professors *emeriti* from the thaumaturgy faculty. (Both elves, of course.)]<<<<<
—Ivy Leaguer (23:08:09/2-26-54)

>>>>>[I know who you mean. Professor Tamarac was a great loss to MITM, but the other one, Professor Flye, was a waste of skin. He hadn't had a fresh idea in three years. Spirits know why UTT even wanted him.]<<<<<
—Gandalf (13:30:55/2-27-54)

>>>>>[I've seen pictures of the old U of O campus, and it looked pretty nice. Not UTT—it's a drekload of bleak, gray buildings done in the "industrial-ugly" style.]<<<<<
—Kirk (05:21:49/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Yes, but if you walk a little you'll reach the school's zoological gardens. Several dozen species of paranormal animals live in their normal habitats here, easily visible to observers. The privilege of seeing a gabriel hound, for example, in its natural environment is beyond price.]<<<<<
—Celed (21:28:31/3-6-54)

>>>>>[I thought Tir elves were into environmentalism and political correctness in a big way. Now I hear they're keeping animals in little cages so ditheads can gawk at them? I thought we got away from that last century.]<<<<<
—Meig (00:41:32/3-8-54)

>>>>>[Don't misunderstand me, Meig. First, the UTT gardens contain no specimens considered significantly more intelligent than a housecat. Second, they are *not* "in little cages," but in perfectly structured illusory environments. The specimens have no way of knowing they're *not* in the wild, these illusions are so complete. And the illusions' unidirectional transparency guarantees spectators a good view.]<<<<<
—Celed (20:37:29/3-8-54)

OPEN CONFERENCE

>>>>>[Okay, chummers. I predict Spes' revelations will prompt as many questions as they answer, and so I'm opening this section of the board for a free form, anyone-can-play bulldrek session. Any topics Spes didn't cover that you want to deal with? Any general comments? Any discussions you decided to take off-line from the main board? This is the place. Go for it, and frag the torpedoes.

I've programmed the board so postings in the same "thread" of conversation stay together (more or less). That way you can scan for those topics that particularly interest you.]<<<<<

—Captain Chaos (21:52:22/2-8-54)

***

>>>>>[If you're in the nation, scope the dark, primeval forests. Go for a hike, camp under their sheltering branches, soak up their ancient mystery. You owe it to yourselves. I found the old-growth forests directly northwest of Portland especially magical.]<<<<<

—Carmanagh (06:43:02/2-14-54)

>>>>>[Tree-hugger. You even get up early. . .]<<<<<

—Rat (18:44:31/2-16-54)

>>>>>[Those "old-growth" forests Carmanagh was rabbiting on about *aren't* old-growth at all. Loggers clear-cut these areas in the late 1990s and fires claimed most of the surviving trees about 2021. Seven years after that, some kind of killing blight struck. By all rights, the oldest tree in the area should stand no more than three meters tall.

Nevertheless, those forests are full of trees that look like they've been growing undisturbed for centuries. I'm pretty sure they're not illusory. So how come?]<<<<<

—Gerhard (23:22:01/2-18-54)

>>>>>[They're not illusory, believe me. But their growth *was* stimulated by magic. Serious magic.

Why? Not for economic reasons—the Tir is judicious in its logging, and doesn't need to create new forests for that purpose. For aesthetic reasons? Perhaps. More likely, the Tir's rulers generated the forests to impress their subjects, as well as observers elsewhere around the world. "We can create hundred year-old forests in ten years," the gesture says, "dare you underestimate what *else* we can do?"]<<<<<

—Corinne (00:52:01/2-20-54)

>>>>>[The *new* "forests primeval" seem to echo with remnants of the magic that created them. Paranormal animals and even free spirits of various kinds wander through them. Their thick stands of sequoias and ferns act like a magnet for magically oriented creatures.

I'm no mage, but I can sense the resonances too. I can't shake the feeling they're dark and oppressive.]<<<<<

—Green Cat (07:09:54/2-24-54)

>>>>>[You gotta be whacked, Cat. The forests are bright, fresh, green with new life.]<<<<<

—Rapunzel (11:34:55/2-24-54)

>>>>>[Yeah, but what *kind* of life? Gabriel hounds, blood kites, agropelters and bandersnatches—real wiz companions for a relaxing jander through the woods.]<<<<<
—Trent (16:08:41/2-27-54)

>>>>>[Green Cat's about the fifth person I've run into recently who claims free spirits are bopping around the Tir. Anybody got any light to shed on this? (Like, *why???*)]<<<<<
—Postatomic Angst (06.14.46/3-2-54)

>>>>>[Hai, it's true an inordinate number of free spirits are floating around the Tir area. From my (admittedly limited) research, I'd say most are spirits who have "gone free" after escaping their summoners' control. Some, however, seem to have appeared in the material world without being summoned.]<<<<<
—Miranda (18:20:08/3-3-54)

>>>>>[So they just kinda showed up 'cuz they liked the look of the Tir, is that what you're saying?]<<<<<
—Hyena (21:42:19/3-5-54)

>>>>>[You've scanned it. And more are turning up all the time.]<<<<<
—Miranda (18:00:51/3-7-54)

>>>>>[That might be true for some of them—that they came to the Tir just because they liked the locale. (I can imagine a kind of transplanar travel agent: "A nice, forested place to spend a quiet century away from the spiritual rat race? Let me see. . .")

But there's more to it than that, chummers. I've had the dubious pleasure of meeting probably the most powerful and influential free spirit in the Tir—an animus who calls himself Gormenghast. He's something of a player, dabbles in metahuman business in the Tir. At the time, he was hiring a team of runners to penetrate a research lab near Corvalis—owned by some outfit called Stormbringer Technologies. He hired me to run Matrix cover, so I never saw the place—except through the odd security camera—and I never found out what the run was all about. He paid me on time, however, and in gold.]<<<<<
—Pele (12:38:04/3-8-54)

>>>>>[I heard some buzz about Stormbringer Technologies (what a fragging name). Your team didn't just penetrate the place, Pele, they blew it up big time, nothing left but a smoking crater.]<<<<<
—Mainstay (04:42:18/3-9-54)

>>>>>[Not true. I was on that team, and we didn't level the place—the subject of Stormbringer's research did that. (I think it's been long enough that it's safe to talk about this now. Nobody geek me if I'm wrong.)

We found out—and I think Gormenghast knew this—that some Stormbringer scientists had captured a powerful fire elemental and were trying to drain its power by technological means. I don't know what their goal was, and I don't *want* to know. Anyway, we followed our contract and freed the elemental from its bindings. . .and then bugged out faster than you've ever seen five heavily laden slags sprint in your life. Stormbringer's hospitality had understandably ticked off the elemental, and it vented its displeasure on everything within a couple hundred meters. (Except us, thank God. It apparently knew we'd helped it.)

And that was it. I've never had any contact with Gormenghast since, but then I haven't sought him out.]<<<<<
—Barstow (21:48:40/3-9-54)

>>>>>[You met Gormenghast face to face? What's he like?]<<<<<
—Tiny (05:42:29/3-10-54)

>>>>>[He looked just like a regular slag, you know? Except that his eyes turned into pits of fire when he got ticked.]<<<<<
—Pele (12:37:06/3-10-54)

>>>>>[You're sure he was a free spirit, not just some mage with a weird sense of humor?]<<<<<
—Vantage (18.48:37/3-10-54)

>>>>>[I knew from the first moment I saw him that Gormenghast *was not* human—meta or otherwise.]<<<<<
—Pele (12:29:22/3-11-54)

>>>>>[I agree completely]<<<<<
—Barstow (21 02.38/3-11-54)

>>>>>[Gormenghast also claimed he'd been in the Tir Tairngire area not for 40 years, or since the magic first came back, but for *thousands* of years. He claimed to remember the Fourth World.]<<<<<
—Pele (12:01:30/3 12-54)

>>>>>[The what?]<<<<<
—Eddie (20.58:43/3-12-54)

>>>>>[The Fourth World ties into a theory that's been knocking around for a decade or so now. Supposedly, the theory sprang from a private lecture Ehran the Scribe gave to a group of young elven technologists some time back. Someone pirated the trideo and it's been making the covert rounds Ehran tried to have it squashed, with minimal success.

Anyway, the theory says that time and history move in cycles, like a sine wave (turn an 'S' on its side). During the 'down' part, the world's mana (magic energy) ebbs, hence no magic During the 'up' part, the level of mana increases and magic appears. This pattern of low mana/high mana continually repeats itself, a full cycle taking somewhere between five and ten thousand years. Every half-cycle, each independent low mana or high mana period creates a separate "World." According to the story, the Awakening marked the beginning of this World.]<<<<<
—Pele (11:02:39/3-13-54)

>>>>>[Frag! I never heard that before. . .]<<<<<
Eddie (14:25 40/3-13-54)

>>>>>[Guess you didn't see the flyer. . .]<<<<<
—Jordan (18:15:13/3-13-54)

>>>>>[Have you ever noticed the two distinct factions in Tir society? First, we have the "New Agers"—I'll call them that for lack of a better word. You know, the back-to-the-landers, the crystal-wavers and the tree-huggers, the supporters of environmental music. They're the ones who are into floatation tanks and weird religions. (Query: Did Timothy Leary and Brigitte Bardot get reincarnated as elves, I wonder?) They oppose "inappropriate" technology and the use of anything that's not renewable

Then you've got the movers and the shakers, the elves who run the businesses and make the big nuyen. They know the way the world works, and they're quite content with it, thank you very much They've got the influence—many of them enjoy high social rank and the confidence of the Council Princes. They follow some of the "ancient traditions," such as observing the conventions of compensation and vouchsafe and speaking Sperethiel, but they're exceptionally pragmatic as well

A wide gulf of incomprehension separates the two factions, but it's only one way. The New Agers can't seem to comprehend the "movers'" world view, but the movers *do* understand the way the New Agers see the world, though they don't agree with it.]<<<<<

—Rooney (19:27:31/3-10-54)

>>>>>[They scan them well enough to manipulate and exploit the frag out of 'em]<<<<<

—Zombie (19:36:41/3-10-54)

>>>>>[The "New Agers," as you call us, have learned to live in harmony, rather than conflict, with the land. Without us, you dinosaurs would have smothered in your own waste products decades ago.]<<<<<

—Star (19.39:14/3-10-54)

>>>>>[You make Gaia sick]<<<<<

—Greensword (19:40:37/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Eat drek and die, tree-hugger.]<<<<<

—Harmony (19.41 05/3-10-54)

>>>>>[Another "politically incorrect" diatribe, Rooney. How do you manage to alienate so many people so quickly? Do you practice?]<<<<<

—Mars (19:46:54/3-10-54)

>>>>>[If you delete the judgmental language, however, Rooney's partially right. The Tir's residents *do* seem to comprise two distinct groups]<<<<<

—Geena (21:42:57/3-10-54)

>>>>>[*Three* groups. You are right in saying there are many "nobles"—those of high social rank—who pride themselves on speaking Sperethiel and following the ancient traditions. But the scions of elvenkind—and here I mean Ehran, Laverty, Surehand and the Oakforest line, among others—treat these "nobles" with the same condescending manner an adult would use with an infant mimicking mature behavior.]<<<<<

—Anonymous (22:05:04/3-10-54)

>>>>>[So why, Anon? Enlighten us on that.]<<<<<

—Vasco (23:18:44/3-10-54)

>>>>>[You tease. . .]<<<<<

—Vasco (13:15:51/3-11-54)

>>>>>[Somebody—who was it? Rooney, I guess—said something about weird religions. I've noticed the Universal Brotherhood doesn't have any foothold in the Tir. Any reading on why? I'd have thought it a perfect match for the nation.]<<<<<

—Tex (08:43:25/3-14-54)

>>>>>[The government won't allow them to set up shop, pure and simple. The Brotherhood tried to open up in Salem in '51, but got shut down hard. They tried again a year later, this time in Portland, and the Council came down on them even harder. The authorities even tossed a couple of the organizers in jail.]<<<<<

—Cardinal (19:52:42/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Religious repression?]<<<<<

—Tremaine (19:53:19/3-14-54)

>>>>>[Not according to the Council. When the UB moves into an area, it sets itself up as a nonprofit organization or as a licensed religion, whichever designation gives it the best tax break. The Council refused to authorize the organization as either, so the Brethren went the nonprofit organization route without the benefit of official sanction—*twice*. In both cases, the Council contended adamantly they were shutting the group down because of that factor alone.]<<<<<

—Cardinal (19:55:04/3-14-54)

hard way. . .may he rest in peace.]<<<<<
—Monitor (17:14:57/4-9-54)

***

>>>>>[What's all this drek about a dragon on the Council? The buzz says elves and dragons are locked into some kind of power struggle. They hate each other, and they'll do anything to frag each other up.]<<<<<
—Ringo (03:30.18/3-21-54)

>>>>>[I don't remember who posted it, but an entry earlier in the files covers that. Don't get fooled by stereotypes or generalizations, the writer said. *Some* elves hate *some* dragons. That doesn't imply some kind of racial antipathy, chummer. You only get that racial antipathy drek in bad fiction.]<<<<<
—Findler-Man (15:42:15/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Tell that to my ancestors, Anglo.]<<<<<
—Tall Tree (19:22:42/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Talk to Kham the ork about the Tir, *then* see if you still believe nothing weird's going on between elves and dragons.]<<<<<
—Jervis (21:42:34/3-21-54)

>>>>>[I talked to Kham too. There's some kind of animosity, but it's not widespread. See, your average Tir elf-on-the-street, she doesn't hate dragons. She's probably scared of them, but that's only rational—frag, *I'm* scared of them. But *some* of the elves. . .let's call them the "scions"—Laverty, Oakforest, Ehran, that crew—*they* seem to have something pretty serious against the wizworms.]<<<<<
—Dysan (05:37:28/3-22-54)

>>>>>[That doesn't scan. All those "scions" of yours are on the Council of Princes, and they named a dragon—Lofwyr—to the Council, didn't they?]<<<<<
—Pentecost (13:28:42/3-22-54)

>>>>>[No. *Lugh Surehand* named Lofwyr to the Council. And Ehran almost quit over it.]<<<<<
—Dysan (04:21 01/3-23-54)

>>>>>[Which tells me that Findler-Man's probably right—there's no racial thing, but some elves don't like dragons.]<<<<<
—Norton (09.43:02/3 23-54)

>>>>>[Or it could mean that Surehand was trying to patch up that racial hatred by naming Lofwyr to the Council, and Ehran didn't want to bury the hatchet.]<<<<<
—Quinn (15:31:24/3-23-54)

>>>>>[That's possible.]<<<<<
—Dysan (22:55:32/3-23-54)

>>>>>[What kind of fragging "racial antipathy" are you hoops talking about anyway, huh? Elves aren't a race, they're a genotype. They didn't exist before 2011 The kind of racial antipathy you're talking about requires some kind of history, that elves just don't have.]<<<<<
—DDT (08:42.52/3-24-54)

>>>>>[Oh?]<<<<<
—Anonymous (08:43:34/3-24-54)

>>>>>[Don't get all mysterious on me, drekhead. Elves are humans first, and any "racial antipathy" individual elves harbor depends on their pre-Awakening race or nationality. For example, a Bosnian elf might hate Serbians, because as a Bosnian that's how he was raised. So don't give me this "elves hate dragons because it's in their blood" drek, okay?]<<<<<
—DDT (08:46 58/3-24-54)

>>>>>[That's too simplistic a view, DDT. I don't understand all the complexities here, but just because I don't scan them doesn't mean they don't exist]<<<<<
—People Watcher (13.42:32/3-24-54)

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>>>>>[On the main board I raised the subject of magical "hot spots" in the Tir. These areas have background counts higher than one would expect from their histories. In all but one case, I have nothing but unsupported guesses as to why this might be, and I choose to keep my speculations to myself. Here, however, are the "hot spots" I have located

Mount Hood—Little mystery to this one. The peak erupted during the Great Ghost Dance, and would be expected to carry a magical "footprint" afterward.

Hells Canyon—The canyon lies in the east of the nation, along the old Oregon-Idaho state line.

Turnbull Dry Lake—Turnbull lies east of Malheur Lake, roughly east-southeast of Eugene.

Warner Lakes—This series of dry lakes lies northeast of Lakeview

Alkali Lake—Alkali is yet another dry lake, near the intersection of the old Oregon, California, and Nevada state lines

Most of these aberrant locations are actually dry lakes, which might provide a clue to the origins of their magical energy. Should anyone have an explanation for this, pray enlighten me.]<<<<<

—Paul Dant (14:50:12/3-17-54)

>>>>>[No guesses, P-Dant. But a question: why no mention of Crater Lake? I'd expect it's background count would go off the top of the scale]<<<<<

—Leiter (18 11:23/3-18-54)

>>>>>[So would I, as a matter of fact. Unfortunately, by the time I had decided to conduct my survey, the Council declared the Crater Lake region off-limits.]<<<<<

—Paul Dant (14:02.45/3-19-54)

>>>>>[The areas are probably "hot" for the same reason that Mount Hood is hot: an area modified or destroyed by magic carries a permanent "echo" of the magic that affected it. Why can't the same thing have happened at those dry lakes? (Like, why did they dry up?)]<<<<<

—Nan (15:54:08/3-21-54)

>>>>>[That doesn't cut it. The lakes were dry long ago, like back in the last century if not long before that.]<<<<<

—Homer (23:02 45/3-21-54)

>>>>>[Researchers at UTT say they've *proven* that material destroyed or integrally altered by magic retains an echo of that magic. (Which makes it good for spell foci, by the way.) Okay, so far it's just like Nan was saying earlier. But they go on to say the strength of the echo increases with time. It's weak but measurable after one year, but noticeably stronger after 20 years. I wonder how much stronger it would be after 100 years?]<<<<<

—Ian (15:00:13/3-23-54)

>>>>>[It's irrelevant to worry about the "amplification" or whatever after more than 42 years, because that's how long ago magic appeared in the world]<<<<<

—Bart (02:01:06/3-24-54)

>>>>>[How strong would it be after 7,907 years?]<<<<<

—Dania (15:49:02/3-24-54)

>>>>>[That's a very specific number. What are you thinking of, Dania?]<<<<<

—Marjorie (17:03:33/3-25-54)

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>>MASTER TRANSCRIPT DOWNLOAD? [Y/N]

—ONLINE CONVERSATION: 4-10-54
—ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS
Alamo Warrior
Anton
Babs
Bluegenes
Curious Curator
Doc
Dr. Finn O'Doul
Fischer
Harrison
Kara
Sagan
Slider
Spes
Stark
—LISTENING IN
The Big 'D'
Studabaker

>>BEGIN CAPTURE::::

>>>>>[Okay, let's get right down to it. *How long do elves live?* About ten years back, all the labs were conducting metabolic studies of the different metatypes, and a couple of them estimated the natural elven lifespan at several centuries. But a year or so later most of them recanted suddenly, claiming their conclusions were flawed. The *new* results, they said, gave elves a lifespan of some 100 years, perhaps 125 at the outside. Just what's the chip-truth here?]<<<<<

—Fischer (19:09:28/4-10-54)

>>>>>[That's the way science works, chummer. You get certain conclusions using a particular technique, or battery of techniques. Later you find your techniques were flawed or your assumptions were incorrect. You withdraw your findings and start over again, using new techniques and analysis algorithms.]<<<<<

—Stark (20:09:11/4-10-54)

>>>>>[But that's *not* the way it happened with the longevity studies. No breakthroughs, or even minor changes, occurred in metabolic research that would cast doubt on the validity of the techniques those researchers used. I've read the literature and their experimental paradigms and analysis algorithms were nigh on perfect. The results *do* show—*still*—that elves could well live for centuries. So why did they repudiate their results? It doesn't scan.]<<<<<

—Babs (20:11:03/4-10-54)

>>>>>[It's obvious, isn't it? Somebody got to them, offered them money or threatened their funding (or their lives, for all I know). Made it in their best interests to withdraw their findings.

And who would have a vested interest in suppressing results like that? Seems obvious to me—the elves of Tir Tairngire.

Isn't that the way it happened? Spes, you out there?]<<<<<

—Bluegenes (20:24:34/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Yes. Pressure was applied in various ways.]<<<<<
—Spes (20:25:01/4-10-54)

>>>>>[*Why??*]<<<<<
—Babs (20:25.37/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Government policy. I really don't know exactly who made the decision or why.]<<<<<
—Spes (20:26:29/4-10-54)

>>>>>[It's pretty fragging obvious, isn't it? The elves don't want the rest of us to know they're going to outlive us by a factor of four.]<<<<<
—Bluegenes (20:28:01/4-10-54)

>>>>>[And why not? Because the dandelion-eaters don't want us to interfere with their plans for world domination—plans that'll take them centuries to complete.]<<<<<
—Alamo Warrior (20:28:57/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Who let that piece of fascist drek onto the board?]<<<<<
—Stark (20:29 31/4-10-54)

>>>>>[That attitude is one of the reasons we found it advantageous to suppress knowledge about our longer lifespan. Knowledge of this genetic boon would undoubtedly have fanned the flames of hatred against our kind. We can understand this reaction and empathize with it all too well. If we were to find a race with a life span many times in excess of *ours*, we too would feel envy, jealousy, and hatred.

The converse of this jealousy is a sense of inferiority. We feared the shorter-lived metatypes might have considered themselves unworthy or insignificant, and lose their vitality and drive. Ethically, we could not allow that to happen. Even though all scientists find censorship and the suppression of truth anathema, we—the scientific community of the Tir—petitioned the government to take action. We did not suppress the truth for any dark motive, as Alamo Warrior assigns to us. We did it to protect our brethren of other metatypes from grave psychological harm.

Furthermore, our research labs are hard at work uncovering the source of elves' long life. If a "longevity complex" can be found, geneticists may be able to engineer the benefits of extended lifespan into future generations of other metatypes.]<<<<<
—Dr. Finn O'Doul, Cuculanan Professor of Genetics, Willamette University (20:35.29/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Man, I could get *into* living 500 years. . .]<<<<<
—Anton (20:35 58/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Oh come *on*, don't buy that drek, chummers. It's a smokescreen and not even a very good one. If the elves want to avoid

suppressed research, and the other metatypes are going to hate 'em even more. Stupid tactical error, one the Tir government wouldn't make

The elves are hiding the truth for some other reason. Maybe not because they want to rule the world, but for some reason other than kindness and charity, you can bet.]<<<<<

—Bluegenes (20 39:13/4-10-54)

>>>>>[So I'll get back to my original question. How long do elves live, anyway?]<<<<<

—Fischer (20:40:02/4-10-54)

>>>>>[I would think that most elves who Awakened in 2011 or later could expect to see their 400th birthdays, barring disease or disaster. As you know, elves mature physically and mentally at the same rate as humans. When they reach an age of about 25, however, their metabolic balance "freezes," and they cease showing physical and mental signs of aging. Senility is expected to set in during the last 100 years of life. Or so we're taught in Tir schools, at least.]<<<<<

—Spes (20.42:13/4-10-54)

>>>>>[. . .Four hundred. . .?]<<<<<

—Fischer (20:43:18/4-10-54)

>>>>>[But you know of elves who've lived much longer than that, don't you, Spes?]<<<<<

—Doc (20:43.56/4-10-54)

>>>>>[What?]<<<<<

—Babs (20.43 59/4-10-54)

>>>>>[No, I do not *know*.]<<<<<

—Spes (20.44.04/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Suspect almost to the point of certainty, then.]<<<<<

—Doc (20:44:10/2-10-54)

>>>>>[Spes?]<<<<<

—Doc (20 46:07/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Yes. I suspect.]<<<<<

—Spes (20:48:40/4-10-54)

>> THE BIG 'D' has joined the conversation

>>>>>[How *much* longer?]<<<<<

—Bluegenes (20 49 00/4-10-54)

>>>>>[I don't know]<<<<<

—Spes (20:49:17/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Are you saying what I *think* you're saying? I mean, we've all heard the buzz on the street that elves are immortal. (Or *some* elves, at least.)]<<<<<

—Fischer (20·50.06/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Yeah, I've heard that. Kham the ork was rattling on about that a couple months back.]<<<<<

—Harrison (20.50·48/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Kham may well be right—and you too, Fischer. I've been carrying out my own research into the elven genome, and I've found a gene complex in the intron between loci telév and incé 31 on chromosome 4—I call it the "stopwatch complex." This complex arrests the natural decay of biological systems—"stops the clock," if you will. By altering an individual's metabolism, it actually stops the aging process at the point where it initiates

As far as I can tell, the complex is present in all metatypes but only fully developed in certain elves. The complex apparently activates in the presence of high levels of mana. How or why, I can't say.]<<<<<

—Doc (20:53.59/4-10-54)

>>>>>[That's just what Spes was saying. Elves "freeze" at 25, and don't start aging until 100 years before they flatline.]<<<<<

—Fischer (20:54:21/4-10-54)

>>>>>[He's half right. Once initiated, the stopwatch complex freezes aging. *But I haven't found anything that turns the complex off again.*]<<<<<

—Doc (20:55.08/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Bulldrek.]<<<<<

—Stark (20 55.39/4-10-54)

>>>>>[No it's not. Doc sent her experimental models to me and to Dr. Derek McLean at Berkeley, and asked us to replicate her research—*without*, I must add, telling us the results she obtained.

We both replicated Doc's results *exactly* and drew the same conclusion. The so-called stopwatch complex is a code for immortality.]<<<<<

—Sagan (20:56:48/4-10-54)

>>>>>[McLean's frizzed. His rep in the scientific community is zero.]<<<<<

—Stark (20:57:02/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Not so. Sure, he's trodden on a bunch of toes with his unconventional theories, and plenty of the doctrinaire scientists would like to see him pickled in a jar. But science isn't a popularity contest.]<<<<<

—Sagan (20:58 10/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Okay, let's say for the sake of argument that I grant you your stopwatch complex. You say there's nothing to turn it off again. How about a complementary complex somewhere else in the genome? Maybe in the dé 214 intron on chromosome 12? It looks like "filler" until something happens to initiate it. Then it masks the stopwatch complex and aging begins again. Isn't that possible?]<<<<<

—Stark (21:00:14/4-10-54)

>>>>>[I didn't find evidence of any such complementary complex.]<<<<<

—Doc (21:00.54/4-10-54)

>>>>>[That's not what I asked. Is what I suggest possible?]<<<<<

—Stark (21:01:30/4-10-54)

>>>>>[You know that it's *possible*. I just found no evidence of it.]<<<<<

—Doc (21:02:03/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Sounds like the "black swan" argument, then, doesn't it? Just because you haven't *seen* a black swan doesn't mean they don't exist.]<<<<<

Stark (21:02:49/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Lighten up, okay, Stark? Why are you getting so worked up about this? It's just an intellectual discussion.]<<<<<

—Babs (21:03:21/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Is it? I wonder. Dr. Samantha Stark has done a lot of consulting work for the Tir—specifically, for Willamette University, and even more specifically, for Dr. Finn O'Doul, the elf who was so keen on suppressing the longevity studies. Seems like a bit of a coincidence that one of O'Doul's "hired gun" consultants is going out of her way to shoot down Doc's comments on elven immortality.]<<<<<

—Slider (21:05.08/4-10-54)

>>>>>[It's true I *used* to consult for O'Doul, but I haven't had any association with the Tir in three years. Do my past associations change the truth? I think not.]<<<<<

—Stark (21:05:47/4-10-54)

>>>>>[If Doc's right, that raises a lot of questions, doesn't it? Like, if immortal elves *are* kicking around—presumably ones born during the last high-mana cycle, because I can't believe any lived through the 12,000 years of the past two worlds—*where did they hang during the low-mana cycle?*]<<<<<

—Bluegenes (21:06:10/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Maybe they hibernate?]<<<<<

—Fischer (21·06 51/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Possibly. Or maybe they just keep a low profile. According to the Mayan calendar, the Fourth World—the last peak in the mana cycle—was going strong around 5,000 B.C. When the cycle turned and the Earth's mana subsided, maybe the immortals just went undercover—bobbed their ears, changed their features, whatever, to pass as humans.]<<<<<

—Bluegenes (21:08:11/4-10-54)

>>>>>[But 5,000 B.C. was what, the Bronze Age or something, right? Would they have figured out how to pass?]<<<<<
—Kara (21:09:28/4-10-54)

>>>>>["Technologically primitive" doesn't mean stupid, Kara. Bronze Age people weren't as *knowledgeable* as us, but that does not mean they weren't as *intelligent*. And if we do postulate immortals, how long had they been alive when the cycle turned and they went undercover? A couple of hundred years? A thousand? You're going to pick up a lot of savvy, street smarts and—okay, let's use the word—*wisdom* in that time.

But tell me—do you people *really* believe immortals live?]<<<<<
—Curious Curator (21:11:09/4-10-54)

>>>>>[It's scientifically possible. Of course, there's no telling if any immortals are still alive. After all, the stopwatch complex provides no protection against accidents or other unnatural deaths.]<<<<<
—Doc (21:11:38/4-10-54)

>>>>>[Echo that. Biological longevity may not have much bearing on projected life span if you're living in a dangerous environment. How many shadowrunners have *you* known who died in bed, for example?]<<<<<
—Slider (21:12:18/4-10-54)

>>>>>[It scans, doesn't it?]<<<<<
—Fischer (21:13:00/4-10-54)

>>>>>[And it sure explains a lot.]<<<<<
—Harrison (21:13:23/4-10-54)

>>>>>[It's all bulldrek and every one of you knows it. *Immortality?* What is this, science fiction we're talking here?]<<<<<
—Stark (21:13:52/4-10-54)

>>>>>[It seems to me that much of what this world took for "science fiction" and "fantasy" not too long ago has come to pass. I'm pleased to discover you are working through all this so quickly, though were it up to me you'd know just about everything already. Just a couple of words, and none too obvious lest certain of my "friends" decide to mount me above the fireplace.

First, be careful of calendars. Victors write not only history, but calendars as well. The Mayans, however, were more accurate than most.

Second, be careful of stereotyping. I can foresee paranoia over this "elven conspiracy" developing quickly. Of course you have the right to be concerned about being deceived, but do not automatically assume the worst. Not all elves are devious, manipulative bastards, just as all dragons are not amoral, condescending supremacists. Some of us are actually quite social.

And third, be careful whose chain you rattle. Dorothy got off lucky peering behind the curtain in Oz. Would she have seen Kansas again if the wizard had been Ehran?

And because my presence and posting has undoubtedly triggered a certain friend of mine's on-line search programs, I think I'll bring this forum to a halt before he can jump up here and confuse things or take action before it gets archived. Crashing the node will trigger an emergency dump save to Denver. Ta ta all, and see you on the trid.]<<<<<
—The Big 'D' (21:223:12/4-10-54)

>>INTRUSION ALERT!
>>INTRUSION ALERT!
>>ILLEGAL CODE SEQUENCE!
>>SYSTEM FAILURE!
>>BEGIN ARCHIVE DUMP
>>SYSTEM FAILURE!
>>SYSTEM FAILURE!
>>SYSTEM FAILURE!
>>SYSTEM FAILURE!
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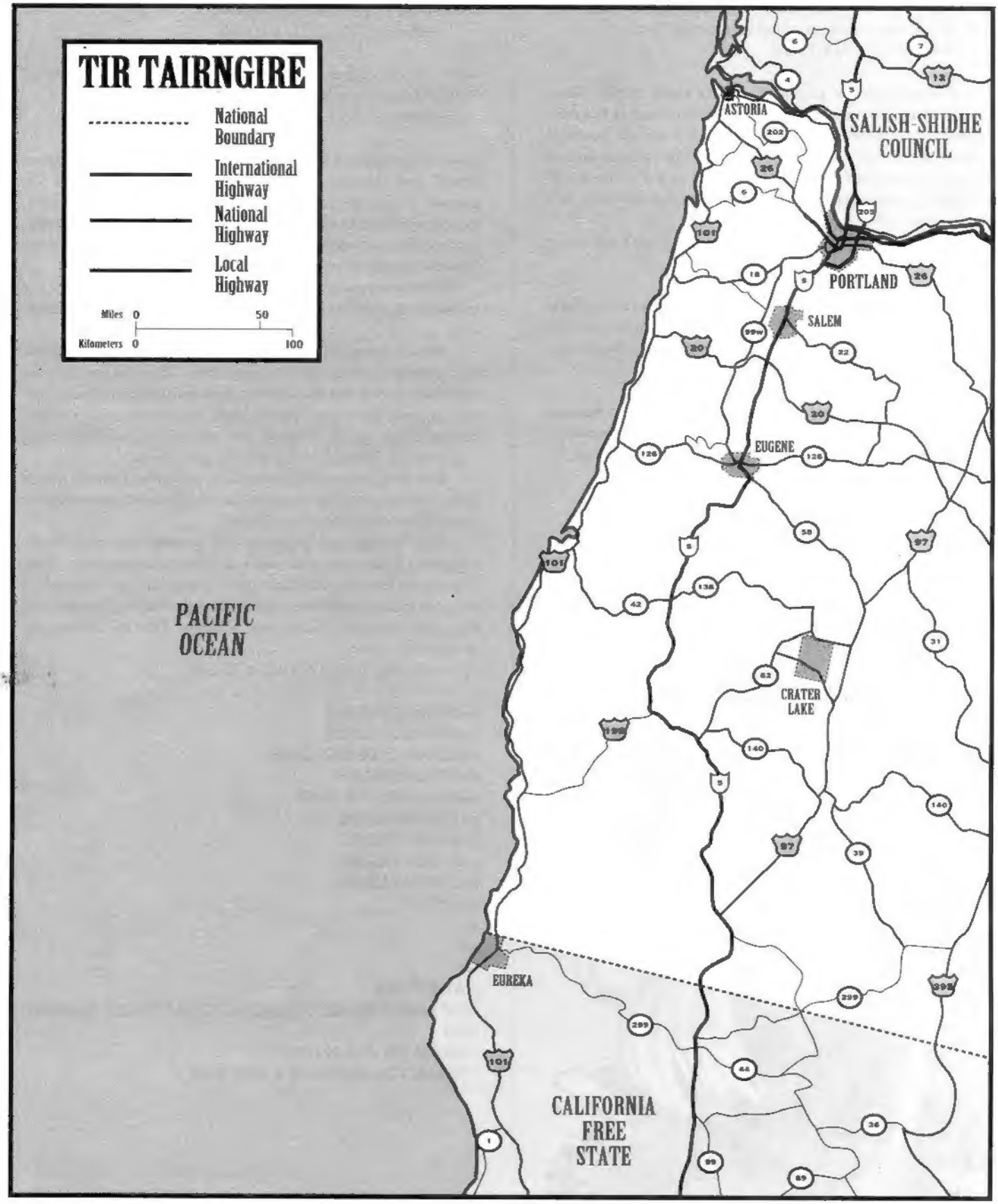
:: ATTENTION!
:: THE NODE YOU ARE CONNECTED TO HAS CEASED TRANSMITTING
:: PLEASE TRY AGAIN LATER
:: THANK YOU AND HAVE A NICE DAY!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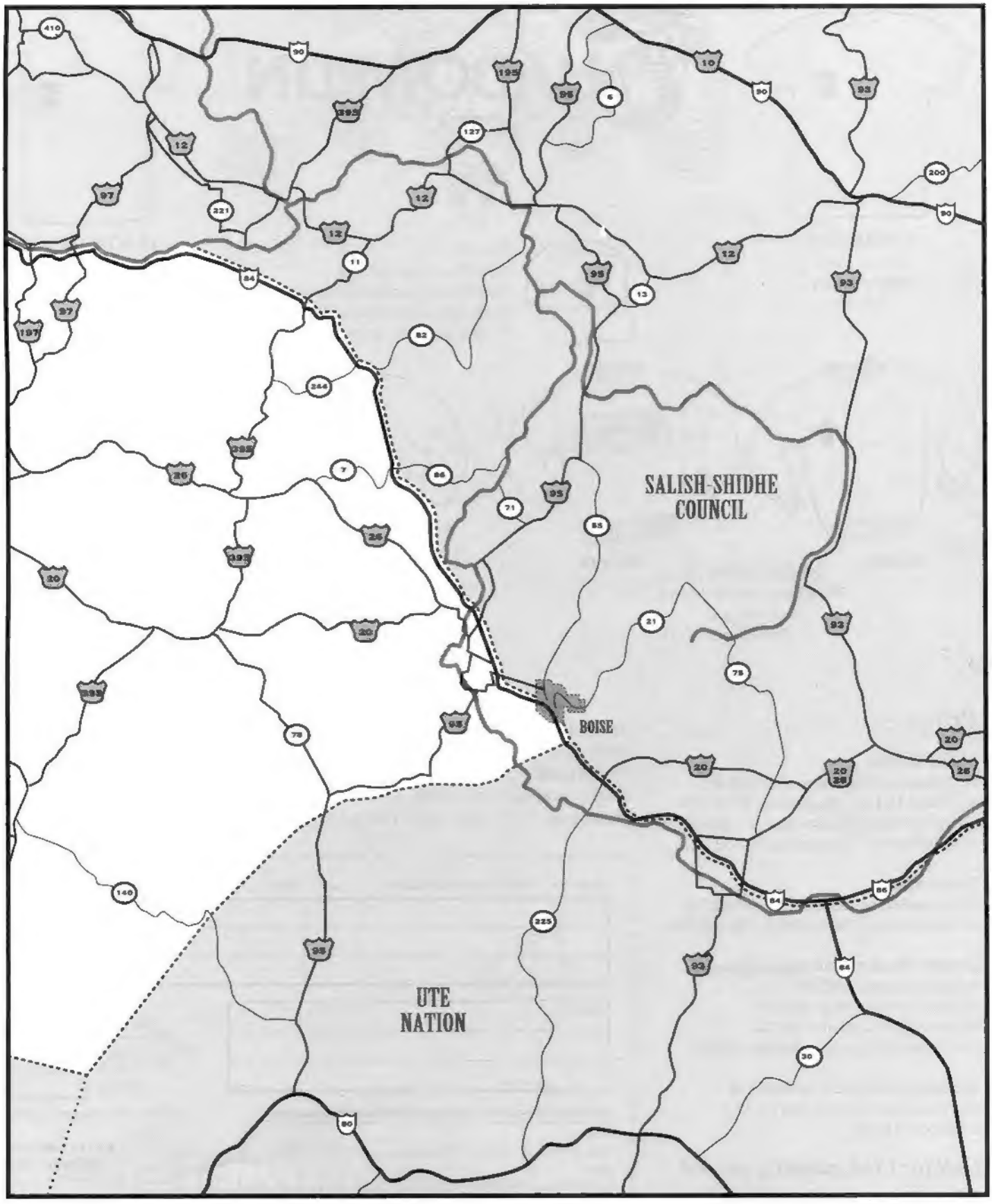
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